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PDF generated on July 20, 2016 from <http://www.cancer.net/cancer-types/thyroid-cancer/questions-ask-doctor>

## **Thyroid Cancer - Questions to Ask the Doctor [1]**

This section has been reviewed and approved by the [Cancer.Net Editorial Board \[2\]](#), 05/2015

**ON THIS PAGE:** You will find some questions to ask your doctor or other members of your health care team, to help you better understand your diagnosis, treatment plan, and overall care. To see other pages, use the menu on the side of your screen.

[Talking often with the doctor \[3\]](#) is important to make informed decisions about your health care. These suggested questions are a starting point to help you learn more about your cancer care and treatment. You are also encouraged to ask additional questions that are important to you. You may want to print this list and bring it to your next appointment, or [download Cancer.Net's free mobile app \[4\]](#) for an e-list and other interactive tools to manage your care.

### **Questions to ask after getting a diagnosis**

- What type of thyroid cancer do I have?
- Can you explain my pathology report (laboratory test results) to me?
- What is the stage of the cancer? What does this mean?
- If MTC is diagnosed, do I need a genetic test? Why or why not? Should family members be tested?

## Questions to ask about choosing a treatment and managing side effects

- What are my treatment options?
- What clinical trials are open to me? Where are they located, and how do I find out more about them?
- What treatment plan do you recommend? Why?
- What is the goal of each treatment? Is it to eliminate the cancer, help me feel better, or both?
- What experience do you have in treating this type of thyroid cancer?
- Where can I get a second opinion?
- Do I need to make a treatment decision right away?
- Who will be part of my health care team, and what does each member do?
- Who will be coordinating my overall treatment?
- What are the possible side effects of each treatment, both in the short term and the long-term?
- Will any of these treatments cause hypothyroidism? If so, what can I expect during this time?
- How will this treatment affect my daily life? Will I be able to work, exercise, or perform my usual activities?
- Could this treatment affect my sex life? If so, how and for how long?
- Could this treatment affect my ability to become pregnant or have children? If so, should I

talk with a fertility specialist before cancer treatment begins?

- If I'm worried about the costs related to my cancer care, who can help me with these concerns?
- What support services are available to me? To my family?
- Whom should I call for questions or problems?

### **Questions to ask about surgery**

- Is surgery recommended? If so, how much of my thyroid gland will be removed? Will lymph nodes be removed as well? What type of scar can I expect?
- Do I need other tests, such as an ultrasound, before surgery to determine the extent of the cancer?
- How experienced is the surgeon in this type of surgery?
- How long will the operation take?
- How long will I be in the hospital for the surgery?
- Can you describe what my recovery from surgery will be like?
- Will I need to take thyroid hormone pills before and/or after this surgery? If so, for how long?

### **Questions to ask about radioactive iodine treatment (I-131)**

- Is radioactive iodine treatment recommended? Why or why not? If so, can you describe this procedure to me?
- Are there precautions I should take after having this treatment?

- Will I need to follow a low-iodine diet? If so, when and for how long?

## **Questions to ask about having other treatments, such as targeted therapy, chemotherapy or radiation therapy**

- What type of treatment is recommended?
- What is the goal of this treatment?
- How long will I have this treatment?
- What side effects can I expect during treatment?
- What are the possible long-term effects of having this treatment?
- What can be done to relieve the side effects?

## **Questions ask about planning follow-up care**

- What is the risk of the cancer returning? Are there signs and symptoms I should watch for?
- What long-term side effects or late effects are possible based on the cancer treatment I received?
- If I need to take thyroid hormone replacement, how often do I need my dose checked through blood tests?
- What follow-up tests will I need, and how often will I need them?
- Will I need to stop taking thyroid hormone replacement for these tests? If so, for how long and what can I expect during this time?
- How do I get a treatment summary and survivorship care plan to keep in my personal records?

- Who will be coordinating my follow-up care?
  
- What survivorship support services are available to me? To my family?

*The [next section in this guide is Additional Resources](#), [5] and it offers some more resources on this website beyond this guide that may be helpful to you. Or, use the menu on the side of your screen to choose another section to continue reading this guide.*

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### **Links**

[1] <http://www.cancer.net/cancer-types/thyroid-cancer/questions-ask-doctor>

[2] <http://www.cancer.net/about-us>

[3] <http://www.cancer.net/node/24958>

[4] <http://www.cancer.net/node/29951>

[5] <http://www.cancer.net/node/19306>