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Thyroid Cancer - Questions to Ask the Doctor [1]

This section has been reviewed and approved by the Cancer.Net Editorial Board [2], 05/2014

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 is important [3] 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.

- What type of thyroid cancer do I have?
- What experience do you have in treating this type of thyroid cancer?
- What is the stage of the cancer? What does this mean?
- 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?
- 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 and follow-up care?
- 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 I be in the hospital for the surgery?
- What can I expect during my recovery from this surgery?
- Will I need to take thyroid hormone pills before and/or after this surgery? If so, for how long?
- Is radioactive iodine treatment recommended? Why or why not? If so, can you describe this procedure to me?
- Will I need to follow a low-iodine diet? If so, when and for how long?

- Will any of these treatments cause hypothyroidism? If so, what can I expect during this time?
- What are the short-term and long-term side effects of my treatment?
- 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?
- If MTC is diagnosed, do I need a genetic test? Why or why not? Should family members be tested?
- What are the chances the cancer will recur?
- If I need to take thyroid hormone replacement, how often do I need my dose checked through blood tests?
- What other 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?
- What support services are available to me? To my family?
- Whom should I call for questions or problems?

The next section offers some more resources that may be helpful to you. Use the menu on the side of your screen to select Additional Resources, or you can select another section, to continue reading this guide.

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/25171
[4] http://www.cancer.net/node/29951