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Skin Cancer (Non-Melanoma) - Questions to Ask the Doctor [1]

This section has been reviewed and approved by the [Cancer.Net Editorial Board](#) [2], 12/2013

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.

Before a diagnosis of skin cancer

- Can you explain what I can expect during and after a skin biopsy?
- Will the biopsy remove all of the lesion?
- Will there be a scar?
- Are there other lesions that should be biopsied?
- To which laboratory is the biopsy being sent? Is there a pathologist who specializes in skin cancer there?

After a diagnosis of non-melanoma skin cancer

- What type of skin cancer do I have?
- Can you explain my pathology report (laboratory test results) to me?
- Are more tests needed to find out if the cancer has spread?
- What are my treatment options?
- What clinical trials are open to me?
- 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?
- 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?
- What are the possible side effects of this treatment, both in the short term and the long term?
- Is there going to be ongoing pain after the removal of the cancer? If so, what types of pain

management programs (such as medications or relaxation techniques) are available?

- What will the scar look like following surgery? How long will it take to heal?
- How will this treatment affect my daily life? Will I be able to work, exercise, and perform my usual activities?
- If I'm worried about managing the costs related to my cancer care, who can help me with these concerns?
- What is the likelihood that the cancer will come back?
- After this treatment, how often should I have check-ups to watch for other skin cancers?
- What other follow-up tests will I need, and how often will I need them?
- What steps should I take to prevent future skin cancers?
- What support services are available to me and 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/skin-cancer-non-melanoma/questions-ask-doctor>

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

[3] <http://www.cancer.net/node/25171>

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