

[Home](#) > [Types of Cancer](#) > [Small Bowel Cancer](#) > [Small Bowel Cancer - Questions to Ask the Doctor](#)

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[Small Bowel Cancer - Questions to Ask the Doctor](#) [1]

This section has been reviewed and approved by the [Cancer.Net Editorial Board](#) [2], 08/2015

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 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.

Questions to ask after getting a diagnosis

- What type of small bowel 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?
- How many patients with this type of cancer do you treat a year?

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?
- Is the treatment you recommend a standard treatment or part of a clinical trial?
- What is the goal of each treatment? Is it to eliminate the cancer, help me feel better, or both?
- When would you recommend I begin this treatment? How long will it be given?
- Who will be a 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 potential side effects, both in the short term and in the long term?
- How will this treatment affect my daily life? Will I be able to work, exercise, and 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 managing the costs related to my cancer care, who can help me with these concerns?

Questions to ask about having surgery

- What do you know about my cancer at this point? What do you expect to know after surgery?
- What other tests will be done before surgery?
- Can you describe the surgery I will be having?
- Is this standard surgery for small bowel cancer?
- How much of my small intestine will you be removing? Will you also be removing lymph nodes?
- Is a biopsy part of the surgery?
- How many times have you performed this type of operation successfully?
- How soon after surgery will I have all test results?
- Who will give me information about how I should get ready for surgery and a hospital stay? How long will I be in the hospital? How long will recovery take?
- How will pain be controlled after surgery?
- Will I need to follow a special diet, with medicines and supplements to aid digestion, after surgery? For how long?

Questions to ask about having radiation therapy, or chemotherapy, etc.

- What type of treatment is recommended?
- What is the goal of this treatment?

- How long will it take to give 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 to 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?
- What follow-up tests will I need, and how often will I need them?
- 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?
- Does my diagnosis mean that my close relatives are at higher risk for small bowel cancer? Should they talk with their doctors about screening?
- Whom should I call for questions or problems?

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.

Links

[1] <http://www.cancer.net/cancer-types/small-bowel-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>

[5] <http://www.cancer.net/node/19644>