



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN DECIDING YOUR TREATMENT PLAN

Whether you are being diagnosed for the first time or have been told that your cancer has metastasized, or is advanced, talking to your healthcare team often is important to help understand your diagnosis, treatment and care plan, and to make informed decisions.

Below you will find a list of questions to ask your doctor at any point to help you learn more about your cancer care and treatment plan. Feel free to add any questions that you have as well and take notes and ask for clarification when necessary.

*These questions have been adapted from cancer.net and mskcc.org

QUESTIONS TO ASK AFTER YOU HAVE RECEIVED A METASTATIC BREAST CANCER DIAGNOSIS

Where in my body has the cancer spread and what are the implications?

Are you experienced in treating women with metastatic breast cancer? If not, who would you recommend?

Would you recommend me seeking you a second opinion?

What is my prognosis? Are there things I can do to improve my prognosis?

QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT TREATMENT

What are my treatment options?

Do you have enough information to recommend a treatment plan? If not, which tests or procedures are needed?

Will my current breast cancer treatment change? If so, how?

What are the goals and risks of each treatment option?

How does having reached (or not reached) menopause affect my treatment options? What is chemotherapy? What is hormonal or endocrine therapy? What is targeted therapy?

What is immunotherapy?

Are there any access barriers with a specific type of treatment?

What can I do to get ready for each treatment?

What are the new research advances for this type of cancer?

What are the potential side effects of each treatment?

Who should I contact about any side effects I experience? How soon after I notice them? What care will be given to help control my symptoms and side effects?

Will I lose my hair, and can anything be done to prevent hair loss?

How will this treatment affect my daily life? Will I be able to work, exercise, and perform my usual activities?

Will this treatment affect my sex life? If so, how and for how long? Is there anything I can do to prevent or treat these effects?

When do I need to make a treatment decision?

Who will lead my overall treatment?

Who will be part of my health care team, and what does each member do? If I have questions or problems, whom should I call?

Do you communicate with your patients by email or with an electronic health record system? What will happen if this treatment stops working?

What will happen if I choose to stop treatment?

QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT CLINICAL TRIALS

Are there any clinical trials appropriate for me? How can I find out more about them?
What does a “clinical trial” mean? Is the treatment approved?
What phase is this clinical trial and what does that mean? What has the research shown so far?
How long will the trial take? What is my commitment?
Is the trial done inpatient or outpatient?
Why is this clinical trial a good fit for me?
What are the potential risks of joining or not joining a particular trial?
How will I know if the treatment is working?
Who will be in charge of my care if I choose to join a clinical trial? Do you remain my doctor?
Are there fees associated with the treatment? If so, who pays for it?
If I have more questions about a specific trial, whom can I contact?

QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT LIVING WITH METASTATIC BREAST CANCER

What level of caregiving will I need at this time?
Where can I find emotional support for my family and me?
What other services are available to my family and me?
If I am worried about managing the costs of cancer care, who can help me? Who can help me understand what is covered by my insurance?
Do you have a social worker I can speak with?
What should I tell my employer, if anything, and what laws protect my rights as an employee?
If I have questions or problems, whom should I call?

QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT ADVANCED CANCER DECISION-MAKING

Will palliative care continue even if I stop cancer treatment?
Where can I receive palliative care?
How often will I need to see a doctor?
What is hospice care? How is hospice care different from palliative care? Am I at the point where I should consider hospice care? If not, will you tell me when I am? Where can I receive hospice care and how can I manage its costs?
Do I need to choose a health care proxy to make medical decisions for me when I cannot?
What legal documents should I have in place that explains what medical treatment I want or do not want? A living will? CPR or do-not-resuscitate orders? A Physician's Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment (POLST) form?
Are there resources you recommend to help me put my legal, financial, and business affairs in order?
What services are available to help my family and me with the emotional and spiritual aspects of death and dying?

MY PERSONAL QUESTIONS

Please add any additional questions you would like to ask here:

If you have any personal questions or concerns, contact Sharsheret’s clinical team at clinical@sharsheret.org or visit Sharsheret’s website at www.sharsheret.org to learn more about our resources.

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