

QUESTIONS TO ASK THE HEALTHCARE TEAM

Visits to the doctor can be overwhelming. Preparing in advance for appointments can help you better understand the diagnosis, test results, treatment, and options throughout your journey.

It can be very helpful to bring another person along to medical appointments. A trusted friend or family member can be supportive, provide an extra set of ears and help to make sure all questions are answered. Recording the meeting is a good way to avoid missing important information. Always ask the doctor for permission before recording.

You should always feel comfortable and supported by your healthcare team. The Pancreatic Cancer Action Network (PanCAN) strongly recommends seeking a healthcare team that suits all of your physical, mental and emotional needs.

QUESTIONS ABOUT A DOCTOR'S EXPERIENCE:

- How many people with pancreatic cancer do you care for each year?
- What have been the results for these patients? Did they have a similar diagnosis?
- Do you work with a team of expert physicians to manage care? Who are they and what are their specialties?

QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR DIAGNOSIS:

- What is my diagnosis? What type of pancreatic cancer do I have?
- What is the stage of my cancer? What does this mean?
- What symptoms can I expect from the cancer?

QUESTIONS ABOUT SURGERY:

- Can my tumor be removed through surgery? Why or why not?
- How many pancreatic surgeries have you performed? How many in the past year?
- How many pancreatic surgeries are performed at your hospital every year?
- What are the possible complications of pancreatic surgery?
- How long should I expect to be in the hospital recovering after pancreatic surgery?
- Would you be able to recommend another experienced surgeon for a second opinion?

QUESTIONS ABOUT TREATMENT:

- What treatment(s) do you recommend? Why?
- Are there any clinical trials available to me at this hospital? At other local hospitals?
- Do you provide biomarker testing of tumor tissue and genetic testing or refer patients to PanCAN's Know Your Tumor[®] precision medicine service to help determine treatment options?
- What are the potential benefits and risks of each of my treatment options?
- Explain the medications being prescribed for me. What does each one do?
- What type of blood tests, scans or other tests will I need during my treatment? How often?

QUESTIONS ABOUT SIDE EFFECTS:

- What are the potential side effects of my treatment options? How likely are they to occur?
- How can I expect to feel during the treatment?
- What medication(s) will be prescribed to help manage my side effects? Do these medications have additional side effects?
- How can I contact you in case of an emergency or if I have any concerns?

QUESTIONS ABOUT DIET:

- Do I need to change my diet?
- Do you have a dietitian that you recommend?
- Will I need to take pancreatic enzymes or vitamins? If so, how often?

QUESTIONS ABOUT SOCIAL CONCERNS:

- Will my ability to work, travel or drive be affected?
- Will I need to spend time in the hospital?
- Will I have physical limitations?
- Are there any lifestyle changes I should make?
- What support programs are available for me and my family?
- Who can I speak with about my financial and/or insurance concerns?
- Who can help me navigate the medical system? Is there an oncology social worker or patient navigator available at this hospital?

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF:

- Does the doctor seem interested in my questions? Is the communication easy?
- Did I get enough time with the doctor to answer all of my questions?
- Do I feel comfortable with the doctor and his/her recommendations?
- Will I be able to reach him/her if I have any questions or concerns while being treated?
- Is the doctor open to me seeking a second opinion?

Even if you feel comfortable with the answers a doctor provides, it may be beneficial to seek a second opinion. You have a right to seek a second opinion. PanCAN strongly recommends seeking a second opinion, as needed, at any point in your diagnosis. Second opinions can be extremely valuable when making treatment decisions, as they allow you to explore all options and gain confidence in the treatment plan. Many doctors welcome hearing the opinions of their colleagues. To receive the names of doctors who specialize in treating pancreatic cancer, contact PanCAN Patient Services.

**For more information, visit pancan.org
For questions, contact us at 877-2-PANCAN**

Contact PanCAN Patient Services M – F, 7 a.m. – 5 p.m. PT, at **877-2-PANCAN**
or **patientservices@pancan.org**. Hablamos español.