



Questions for Your Oncologist

Below are some of the most useful questions to have answers to, as suggested by experienced patients and practitioners. There are probably too many to get satisfactory answers to in one appointment, so it may be necessary to ask some by email or across more than one appointment.

It is important to write down answers, particularly any complex medical terms, so strongly consider taking a friend with you to do this (and for support) and/or even recording the appointment, if your oncologist agrees.

- What type of cancer do I have?
- Is my cancer growing fast or slowly?
- What are your treatment recommendations?
- Why have you chosen this treatment? How do you know that it is the best one for me?
- Are there any other known treatments for my cancer, in the UK or abroad, that are not available on the NHS, which I could possibly obtain privately? Have you considered these?
- Is the proposed treatment curative or palliative, i.e. will it get rid of the cancer enabling me to have a normal quality and length of life, or will it only extend my life by slowing the growth of the cancer or just improve my quality of life without lengthening it?
- What percentage of people see their cancer coming back after the proposed treatment? How soon does this tend to happen?
- How much time do you think I have to live if I go ahead with your recommended treatment?

- How much time do you think I have to live if I don't go ahead with your recommended treatment?
- What will my quality of life be like during and immediately after treatment? How disruptive and uncomfortable will the treatment be and what side-effects can I expect?
- What are the long-term side effects of the proposed treatment? Could they be life-threatening or leave me permanently disabled or impaired?
- Would you do this treatment if you had the same diagnosis as me?
- Are there any diet or lifestyle changes I can make that could improve my quality of life during treatment or make the treatment more effective?
- Can I talk to other patients who have had this treatment before deciding to go ahead?
- How soon do I need to make a decision as to whether or not to go ahead with the proposed treatment?

If the answer to the above is sooner than you would like and doesn't leave you enough time to carefully consider your options:

- What would the consequences be of delaying my decision by x weeks?