



KidneyCancerAssociation™

Unstoppable Together.

Questions to ask your doctor

Taking an active role in your kidney cancer care is important. Studies have shown that people with cancer who are well informed about their cancer and treatment options usually have better outcomes and fewer side effects than those who just follow their doctors' orders. Below are some questions that you can ask your healthcare team at any part of your kidney cancer journey.

To make the most out of each of your doctor's appointments:

- Write down all the questions you and your family have ahead of time.
- Make plans to bring someone with you or call or use a video chat to have them virtually sit in.
- Bring a notebook with your list of questions and a pen to your appointment. You can also bring a recording device or use a recording app on your phone. That way you can go back and listen to what the doctor said after your appointment to make sure you have all the details. Be sure to let your doctor know you are recording the conversation.
- Remember, it is okay to ask the doctor to repeat what they said so you can understand better or to contact them later with a follow-up question.

About your kidney cancer

- What does the type, subtype, and stage of my kidney cancer mean for my prognosis? What does it mean for my treatment plan?
- What caused my kidney cancer?
- Should I have genetic testing?
- Are my family members at risk of developing kidney cancer because I have it?
- What is the best way to explain my diagnosis to my family and friends?

When finding a specialist

- How many people with kidney cancer do you diagnose and treat each year?
- How many nephrectomies have you done? How often do you perform this surgery? What are your outcomes? How many people have died as a result of the surgery?
- Where is your office located? Where can I park? What building entrance should I use?
- What insurance plans do you accept?
- What is the main purpose of this visit? Will I have an exam or are we discussing my test results and treatment options?
- What should I bring to my appointment? Insurance information? Medical records, diagnostic information, and pathology reports? Anything else?
- Will I have any procedures during my visit? Is there anything I should avoid prior to this visit?

Your treatment options

- What is the treatment plan you recommend? Why?
- What are the risks of this treatment plan? What are the benefits?



- What is the goal of my treatment plan? To eliminate my cancer or make me feel better, or both?
- How long do I have to decide on my treatment plan?
- How does my age, other health issues, and cancer stage limit my treatment options?
- How can I prepare for treatment? Are there lifestyle changes I should make to be healthy before, during, and after my treatment? Should I stop taking my medications?
- How can I figure out what the treatment will cost and if my insurance will cover it?
- I'm worried about paying for my treatment. Who can help me?
- How often will I have treatments? How long will they last?
- How will this treatment affect my daily life? Will I still be able to go to work, exercise and do my normal daily activities?
- What are the chances that my kidney cancer will return after treatment?
- What are the side effects I need to watch out for?

Clinical trials

- What clinical trials are available for my type and stage of kidney cancer?
- What does the treatment do? How is it different from what is currently available?
- Will I know what treatment I receive? Will I receive a placebo?
- Will it cost me anything to be a participant?

During treatment

- How am I responding to my current treatment?
- Would another kind of treatment work better?
- If I don't have any symptoms, does this mean my cancer is under control?
- I have an important family event coming up, can we arrange treatment around that?

Managing side effects

- What tips do you have for managing my side effects?
- Should I report any side effects I am experiencing to a particular member of my healthcare team? What if I need after hours help?
- Will these side effects interfere with how well my treatment is working?
- Are there additional medications I should take to help prevent and/or manage my side effects?
- How do you decide if my side effects are too great and I need to reduce or change my treatment?

Follow up

- What follow-up tests will I need? How often do I need them?
- How soon after all the tests will I have the results? Who will explain them to me?
- I have been feeling so much better lately, does this mean I am in remission?
- What long-term side effects are possible based on the treatment I am receiving?



Get support

- Who handles health insurance concerns in your office?
- What support services are available to me and my family?
- How can I find a social worker to help me locate support services?