

Patients as Partners: Multiple Myeloma

Receiving a cancer diagnosis is overwhelming. You, your oncologist, and the other medical professionals who will care for you now make up an important team. As part of your team, these providers want to answer all your questions and have frank, open discussions with you so you can make informed decisions.

When you first meet your oncologist

Prepare for your first oncologist appointment by bringing a list of any questions you have.

Questions such as:

- What kind of multiple myeloma do I have?
- What stage of multiple myeloma do I have and what does that mean?
- What treatments are available to me?
- Do I need other tests before we decide on treatment?
- Do I need to see any other doctors?



When deciding on how to treat your multiple myeloma

Your oncologist wants to know what is important to you so you can work together to select the best treatment. There are various factors to consider, so ask yourself these questions and share your thoughts with your oncologist:

- What is my lifestyle like? Am I physically active?
- Do I work full-time?
- Do I have a major event coming up in the next year?
- What is my weekly or monthly routine?
- How flexible can I be with my commitments?



You can also ask your oncologist:

- What is the goal of the treatment?
- How will the different treatment options impact my daily life?
- How long will the treatment last?
- Where will the treatment be done?
- What are the risks and side effects of the treatment?
- What are the chances the cancer will come back after treatment?

When treating your multiple myeloma

Once you begin treatment, your oncologist will need to assess how the treatment is working. You can ask:

- How will we know if the treatment is working?
- Do I need blood tests?
- How has the cancer affected my bones?
- Do I need pictures of my bones?

Your oncologist will also want to know about any side effects from treatment. There are ways to help you feel better, but only if you let your care team know about any issues. Ask your care team:

- What side effects should I expect?
- What can I do to help manage side effects?
- What side effects should I tell my care team about right away?
- How can I speak with my care team after hours?
- What if I start to feel overwhelmed? Is there a mental health professional I can speak with?



Continue to bring your questions to your care team throughout your treatment and recovery, and remember that in addition to your doctors, you can also speak to other health care professionals such as nurses and social workers. Open communication with all members of your team will help to ensure you receive the care that's best for you.



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American Cancer Society. Questions to Ask About Multiple Myeloma. Accessed June 2, 2022.
<https://www.cancer.org/cancer/multiple-myeloma/detection-diagnosis-staging/talking-with-doctor.html>

