Questions to Ask Your Doctor

The following are to assist you in getting the most out of your care. Check those that are most important to you and review with your medical team.

Diagnosis
○ What stage is my cancer?
○ Can you tell if this is a fast-growing type of cancer, or a slow-growing type?

Tests
○ What tests will I have?
○ When should I expect the results from these tests?
○ What will these tests tell me about my cancer?
○ How long after I have these tests will I know the results?
○ Who will call me with the results of these tests? Or, whom should I call to get the results?
○ If I need to get copies of my records, scans, X-rays, whom do I contact?
○ Do I have to do anything special to prepare for the tests?
○ Do these tests have any side effects?

Doctors
○ How many doctors will be involved in my care? Who are they? What are their roles?
○ Who will be the doctor in charge of coordinating my care and the rest of the doctors?
○ What other health care professionals can I expect to be involved in my care?

Treatment
○ What is the standard treatment for my type of cancer?
○ How many patients have you treated with this treatment? What have been the results?
○ How does this treatment compare to other institutions?
○ What is the future outlook (prognosis) for my type of cancer with standard treatment?
○ Are there any other treatments that might be appropriate for my type of cancer?
○ What treatment do you recommend? On what do you base your recommendation?
○ What are the risks or benefits of the treatment you are recommending?
○ Who would you recommend that I talk to for a second opinion?
○ What percentage of patients usually responds to this treatment?
○ How long does each treatment last?
○ How long is the entire course of therapy?
○ How often will I be treated?
○ What type of results should I expect to see with the treatment?
○ Will there be tests during my treatment to determine if it is working?
○ What will it feel like to get treated?
○ Can someone accompany me to my treatment?
○ Can I drive to and from my appointments? Is parking available?
Questions to Ask Your Doctor

Treatment (Cont.)
○ Will I have to be in the hospital to receive my treatments?
○ Who will administer my treatments?
○ How often, during treatment, will I see a doctor? The nurse?
○ Will a reduction in or delay of the recommended therapy reduce my chances of being cured?
○ Are there foods or medications or activities that I should avoid while I am going through treatment?
○ How soon after treatment can I go back to work?

Clinical Trials
○ Are there any clinical trials or research being done on my type of cancer?
○ Are there any clinical trials that you particularly recommend?
○ Am I a candidate for any of the clinical trials that you recommend?
○ Where can I find related research information?
○ Is there anyone else in the area that is involved in research that I might contact to discuss my cancer?
○ How much time do I have to make a decision about my treatment options?

Support
○ Where can I get literature about my illness?
○ Are you willing to speak to my spouse or other family members about my illness and my treatments?
○ Where can I find out about support groups?
○ Can I speak to someone who has undergone this type of treatment?
○ Is there a social worker that I could talk with?
○ Is there a dietician on staff if I have nutritional concerns or difficulties?
○ Do I need to be on a special diet?
○ Are there any lifestyle changes you would recommend?
○ Who do I call if I have an emergency medical situation during my treatment, or shortly afterwards?
○ What are the telephone numbers I should have in order to reach you? The nurse? The hospital?

Side Effects
○ Should I watch for any particular symptoms?
○ How likely are they to occur?
○ What should I do if I have side effects?
○ Who should I call if I experience severe side effects?
○ What can be done to prevent these side effects or reduce their severity?
○ When might these side effects occur?
○ Could these side effects be life threatening?
○ How long will the side effects last?
○ What treatments are available to manage these side effects?

Patient and Family Cancer Support Center
Mission Bay & Mount Zion Campuses
San Francisco, CA

More Information:
For additional information or resources, please visit: https://cancer.ucsf.edu/support-services
Or call: 415-885-3693