

Questions to Ask the HealthCare Team

Questions to ask if you find an abnormal area in the breast or have an abnormal mammogram

Will I have to have a biopsy?

What type of biopsy will I need?

Why do you recommend that type of biopsy?

Will the biopsy hurt? How long will the biopsy take?

Can I drive afterwards or do I need to bring someone?

Will I be sedated or awake?

When will I know the results of the biopsy?

Who do I call if I have problems after the biopsy?

What happens if the biopsy is cancer?

Whom should I call with questions and what is the number?

Questions to ask if you are diagnosed with cancer

What kind of cancer do I have?

What stage is my cancer?

What did the hormone receptor test show?

Were other tests done on the tissue and if so, what were the results?

Whom should I call with questions and what is the number?

Questions for the Surgeon

What is the name of the type of breast cancer I have?

How large is the tumor? Is the tumor in-situ or invasive?

Do you expect cancer cells to be found in my lymph nodes?

Do you expect the cancer has invaded anything else such as skin, muscle, bones, other organs?)

Is there evidence on my mammogram that there might be cancer anywhere else in this breast or in the opposite breast?

Will I have to have surgery? If so, what type do you recommend?

Why do you recommend that type of surgery?

What can I expect to look like after surgery?

Will lumpectomy give me the same chance for control of my cancer as mastectomy?

Am I candidate for sentinel node biopsy? Do you perform sentinel node biopsies?

Will my cosmetic results be acceptable?

Will I have drains after surgery?

Will I go home with drains?

When do you expect the drains to be removed?

Is the surgery outpatient or will I be hospitalized? If so, for how long?

Am I candidate for immediate reconstruction?

Can you provide me with information about immediate reconstruction?

Tell me the advantages and disadvantages of immediate reconstruction.
Could you provide me with information on the use of implants and the potential use of my body tissues for reconstruction?
Do you foresee anything in my present health status that could prevent me from having either type of reconstruction?
When will I know the results of my surgery?
What will the recovery time be? When can I return to work?
Where will the surgical incision be? What will the scar look like after surgery?
What side effects should I expect from surgery?
Will I need chemo, radiation or hormonal therapy following surgery?
Will I see a medical oncologist and/or radiation oncologist? When?
When will radiation and/or chemotherapy begin?
Is there anything else you need to tell me about my cancer or surgery?
Do you have written information on my cancer or surgery?
Do you recommend any books or videos?
Do you recommend any support groups or a professional counselor?
Whom should I call with questions and what is the number?

Questions for the Reconstructive Surgeon

What type of surgery do you recommend for me?
Am I candidate for immediate reconstruction?
Can you provide me with information about immediate reconstruction?
Tell me the advantages and disadvantages of immediate reconstruction.
Could you provide me with information on the use of implants and the potential use of my body tissues for reconstruction?
If an implant, what kind of implant do you recommend? Will it be placed under the muscle?
Do you foresee anything in my present health status that could prevent me from having either type of reconstruction?
May I see photographs or talk to some of your patients?
What can I expect to look like after surgery?
Will you reconstruct my areola and my nipple?
How much feeling or sensation will I have in my reconstructed breast?
How will my breast feel when touched?
Will this surgery cause me to have additional scars?
Will my surgery cause any constrictions on future activities?
How many surgical procedures will my reconstruction require?
How long will I be in the hospital for each procedure?
How often will I need a return appointment for you?
How long will the complete reconstruction process take?
How long before I can return to normal activities after each procedure?
How much will it cost? How much will my insurance cover?
What problems can occur potentially in the future after reconstructive surgery?

Questions for the Medical Oncologist

What is the goal of treatment?
What are my treatment options?
Is there a role for hormone therapy in my treatment?
What side effects will I experience?
How will I manage them?
When will the side effects begin?
How long will I receive treatment, how often, and where?
How will the treatment be given?
Where will I receive my treatment? Do I have to stay in the hospital?
How will I know if the treatment is working?
What are the names of the medications I will be taking?
Am I at greater risk for infections while receiving treatment? If so, how do I prevent an infection from occurring?
How will the treatment affect my usual activities?
Can I work while getting treatment?
Are there any activities I should avoid while receiving treatment?
Should I eat before I come for my treatments?
Can I take vitamins or herbs if I so choose?
What kind of precautions should I take for my skin during chemotherapy?
How will you evaluate the effectiveness of my treatment?
What about clinical trials? Am I a candidate for them?
Should I consider genetic testing?
Will I need a port?
Should I use birth control and what type?
Will I continue to have menstrual periods?
Will I still be able to conceive and bear a child after treatment?
Whom should I call with questions and what is the number?

Questions for the Radiation Oncologist

What is the goal of treatment?
What are my treatment options?
What side effects will I experience?
How will I manage them?
When will the side effects begin?
How long will I receive treatment, how often, and where?
How will the treatment be given?
How will I know if the treatment is working?
Am I at greater risk for infections while receiving treatment? If so, how do I prevent an infection from occurring?
What kind of precautions should I take for my skin during radiation therapy?
Is there anything I should not use during radiation? (such as deodorant, perfume, lotions to the chest or back, etc?)

How will the treatment affect my usual activities?
Can I work while getting treatment?
Are there any activities I should avoid while receiving treatment?
Whom should I call with questions and what is the number?

Questions for After Treatment

What happens after I finish treatment?
How often will I need checkups?
What kind of lab tests will I need? How frequently?
Will I need x-rays or scans and if so, how often?
How long does it take for the side effects to resolve once treatment is complete?
What happens if my cancer returns?
When will my hair grow back?
What symptoms should I report?
Whom should I call with questions and what is the number?