



Important Steps in Treatment Decisions

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- **Find experts in cancer.** You should be comfortable with, and confident in, your care. Choose a provider/hospital/cancer facility that suits you best. If you are seeing several different providers, make sure your care is coordinated properly.
- **Understand your rights.** You are entitled to certain rights from your hospital and doctors. This includes the right to make decisions about your treatment, obtain relevant, current, and understandable information, and receive care that is respectful and considerate.
- **Research your treatment options.** Learn about the cancer type you have, its stage, and your treatment options. Ask your doctor about patient education materials and resources. Compare the benefits and risks of the different cancer treatments to decide which treatments are best for you.
- **Explore complementary therapies.** Ask about and take advantage of other services to supplement your cancer treatment, such as nutrition therapy, rehabilitation, counseling and spiritual support. Make sure your doctor is monitoring any complementary therapies you are using.
- **Expect the best.** Make sure you get answers to your questions and the attention you deserve. Your care providers should communicate regularly with each other, and you, about your treatment plan. It also helps to find a medical facility where your care is handled in one place.
- **Get a second opinion.** Don't be afraid of offending your doctor if you would like to get a second opinion. Most doctors understand the need for a second opinion when facing a major decision. Your doctor might even recommend it to help you explore your options.
- **Prepare ahead.** Your doctor can give you an idea about what to expect from cancer treatment, including possible side effects and how to manage them. Think about how the treatment will affect your everyday life, including work and family.
- **Set reasonable goals.** Set regular goals for yourself, no matter how small. For instance, your goal one day could be to walk five more minutes than the day before. Don't try to push yourself too hard though. Listen to your body for cues about how much you can handle.
- **Become involved in your treatment plan.** Being involved in your treatment plan may give you a greater sense of control and help you feel more confident as you begin treatment. It is up to you to decide how involved you would like to be in decision-making and what you want out of treatment.
- **Maintain open communication with your doctor.** Communication with your doctor is essential. You want to make sure you are getting the information and advice you need to make informed decisions. You also want to keep your doctor informed about how you are feeling and any new symptoms you may be experiencing.

*This information is neither intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical guidance.
Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider prior to making decisions about your medical care.*