

## 20 Questions to Ask Your Oncologist (*Before Agreeing to Treatment*)

1. Will you be **my treating physician for my cancer?**
2. If you are not treating me yourself (or, if other doctors will be involved in my case): **Which doctor(s) will you be referring me to** for my cancer treatment, and when can I expect to meet with them?
3. If you are going to treat me: **Which tests are you going to conduct to ensure an accurate diagnosis, and that we are targeting all possible tumours?**  
The answer you want to hear is that they're going to give you a **PET/CT** and a **broad panel genetic test**, at minimum. And, if they aren't going to do that, then you want to ask them to show you why they think you don't need one. Hint: they can't, because the research is too stacked in favour of genetic testing and PET/CT – however, it will be important for you to hear their explanation...and for them to hear it, too.
4. **Which treatment are you going to offer me first?**  
And why? (What is this decision based on?)  
You want to know that their choice is based on **your specific case** – and not just on what they offer everyone.
5. **What is the process for receiving that treatment?**  
It is important that you know what to expect and that you also understand what this recommended treatment will require of you versus your other options (such as targeted therapies).
6. **How successful is this treatment for people with my cancer?**  
How many people survive, and for how long do most people survive with this treatment?
7. **What kind of side-effects are common with this treatment?**  
How long do they last? And what are the potential long-term and short-term consequences of this treatment?
8. **When will I have my first treatment?**
9. **And how frequently will I receive treatments thereafter?**



- 10. How will you be monitoring me during treatment to tell if it's working?**  
Which test will you use? And how frequently?
- 11. What is your backup plan for treatment if this first option is not successful?**  
And how successful is that treatment for my type of cancer?
- 12. What kind of side-effects are common with this treatment?**  
How long do they last? What are the potential long-term and short-term consequences of this treatment?
- 13. Will there be surgery?**  
And if so when?
- 14. And what can I expect with that in terms of procedure, outcome and recovery?**  
What kinds of side-effects can this procedure lead to?
- 15. What kind of testing will be performed when my treatment is complete to ensure it has been successful?**  
How accurate is that testing?  
(For example, CT scans are less than 70% accurate, while liquid biopsies are 99.98% accurate.)
- 16. How frequently will there be follow-up monitoring?**  
Will there be annual screening? And how will that be conducted?
- 17. How often will we be meeting during my treatment process and after?**
- 18. Who else will I be meeting with during this time?**
- 19. What can I do to help myself during this time?**  
What diet and exercise changes should I make? What other aspects of self-care should I pay attention to?
- 20. What else do you think is important for me to know before I make a decision about my treatment?**