

Top 10 Things Every Patient Needs to Know

1

You Have a Story to Tell. Don't Be Afraid to Tell it.

No one knows YOU better than YOU. Your life expertise and day-to-day experiences are an important part of your health care. What should your health care team know about you as a person? What are your short-term and long-term goals? Make sure you openly share your preferences and values since this may influence your decisions and actions.

2

Ask Questions and Close the Loop.

Your health depends on open communication. Asking questions is the best way to gain a deeper understanding of your health and is the simplest and most effective way of learning about your condition and how to best manage it. Prioritize your questions and ask the most important ones first. Be sure to also close the loop on test results. No news isn't always good news!

3

Know Your Options So You Can Make Informed Decisions.

It's important you understand your options, the risks and benefits of each option (including cost), and how much time you have to make a decision before you need to determine the best pathway for you. You want your care to fit your goals, lifestyle, and limitations so that you can develop an action plan in partnership with your care team. Clinical trials should be considered as a care option, as well.

4

Get a Second Opinion.

Navigating options can be complex, and you should invest in your health by finding the right doctor. Consider also getting a second opinion before proceeding with treatment since there may be different ways of treating your condition. Make sure that all your tests and records are shared with different doctors in advance of the visit so that you don't have to repeat them. You can then review results together and discuss options during your appointment.

5

Trust is Key.

Build a relationship with a doctor you can trust, have an open dialogue and partner with over time. You want a doctor you can be honest and transparent with so that you can share your concerns, emotions and challenges openly without judgment, embarrassment or fear.

6

Designate an Advocate.

Navigating the complexities of health care can be overwhelming. It can be hard to recall important information, make decisions when emotions get in the way and/or coordinate between different doctors. It helps to have someone by your side so you can focus your energy on your health. This can either be a family member, a friend or even a professional advocate.

7

Stay Organized and Get Access to Your Records.

You will see different doctors, undergo various tests, and may be swamped with paperwork. Keeping it all organized can help give you a sense of control and make it easier to manage your care over time. Stay on top of your test results and medical records, which can be accessed electronically, to help you better coordinate your care, understand your condition, seek clarification and correct any potential errors.

8

Get to Know Your Cancer.

Each person's cancer is unique and the more information you have, the more empowered you will be to make decisions on next steps. Learn the type and stage of your cancer, and whether you have any biomarkers. Ask if you're eligible for biomarker testing early on since some biomarkers affect how certain treatments work.

9

Stay Connected.

Coping with your illness and changes over time can be an emotional experience. Connecting with others can provide support and improve your quality of life, whether it's informal support from family and friends, formal support from group or individual therapy and/or peer-to-peer networking through online communities. Staying connected doesn't mean you always have to talk about cancer, but it's important you lean on the power of community!

10

Partner With Your Care Team and Share What You Learn Online.

Misinformation is a growing issue. Many of us rely on "Dr. Google" for information, but it's sometimes difficult to determine whether information you find online is credible or up-to-date. Content you find on the internet is not regulated so use good judgment when searching. Your health care team can also recommend reputable websites and validate what you learn online.

