

Your Prostate Cancer Diagnosis

Questions to ask your doctor or specialist

A guide to help you make informed choices about your health



A prostate cancer diagnosis can leave you anxious and confused, likely with more questions than answers.

These commonly asked questions are intended to guide your conversations and help you make informed decisions about what to do next, and choose the best pathway for you.

Write down any questions in advance and take this booklet with you to your appointments and take notes. If possible, take someone with you, it can help recall discussions. If all parties agree, you might like to record the discussion on your phone.



Questions to ask your doctor or specialist

1. When told you have prostate cancer
2. When deciding a treatment plan
3. About prostate cancer before treatment
4. About prostate cancer during treatment
5. About prostate cancer after treatment

This information is not a tool for self-diagnosis or a substitute for professional medical advice. Always seek the guidance of your doctor or other qualified health professional with any questions you may have regarding your health.

1 | When you're told you have prostate cancer

- What type of prostate cancer do I have? Localised or advanced.
- How do I get a copy of my pathology report?
- What is my PSA (prostate-specific antigen) level? What does this reading mean?
- What is the cancer's clinical stage and grade (Gleason or ISUP Score)? What does this Gleason or ISUP score represent?
- What are the chances that the cancer has spread beyond my prostate?
- How does this affect my treatment options and long term outcome (prognosis)?
- What are my chances of survival?
- How much experience do you have treating this type of cancer?
- Will I need other tests before we can decide on a treatment?
- What treatment choices do I have?
- What treatment do you recommend and why?
- What is the goal of my treatment?
- Is watchful waiting or active surveillance an option for me? Why or why not?
- Do I need to have my prostate removed or treated with radiation? Why or why not?
- If I have surgery (radical prostatectomy), will the nerves be spared?
- In my case is it possible to have robot-assisted surgery?
- If I have radiation, what types of radiation therapy might work best for me? External beam or Brachytherapy?
- What are the pros and cons of radiation versus surgery in my case?
- What other treatments might be right for me?
- Should I get a second opinion? How do I get that?
- Do I need any scans (MRI or PSMA PET/CT) to help make the diagnosis more accurate?

You will usually see a urologist for your first appointment. You should also ask to see a radiation oncologist for their opinion on your treatment options.

It is quite normal to want a second opinion about your results and/or treatment options. Talking it through with another doctor or medical professional who understands prostate cancer can help clear up any concerns and build your confidence about what to do next.

2 | When deciding a treatment plan

- What are the chances the cancer will come back with this treatment plan?
- What if 'plan A' doesn't work or the cancer returns? What are my next steps after initial treatment?
- How long will the treatment last? What will it involve? Where will it be done?
- Can you explain the risks and side effects of each treatment?
- What can I do to reduce the side effects of the treatment?
- How will the treatment affect my daily activities?
- What are the chances that I will have problems controlling my urine (incontinence) or getting an erection (impotence) as a result of the treatment?
- Will the treatment hurt?
- Will I have any scars?

3 | About prostate cancer before treatment

- What can I do to get ready for treatment?
- Should I follow a special diet or make other lifestyle changes?
- Should I see a physiotherapist to learn about pelvic floor exercises prior to treatment?

4 | About prostate cancer during treatment

- How will we know if the treatment is working?
- Is there anything I can do to manage the side effects?
- What symptoms should I tell you about right away?
- Will I need a special diet during treatment?
- Are there any limits on what I can do?
- Can you suggest a mental health professional I can see if I start to feel overwhelmed, depressed, or distressed?
- Will I need special tests, such as imaging scans or blood tests, and how often?

5 | About prostate cancer after treatment

- Will I need a special diet after treatment?
- Are there any limits on what I can do?
- What can I do about impotence/incontinence and other side effects?
- Will I recover normal function and what can I do in the meantime?
- What kind of exercise should I do?
- What type of follow-up will I need after treatment?
- How often will I need to have follow-up exams and imaging tests?
- What blood tests will I need?
- What should my PSA level be after treatment and how long will it take to get there?
- How often will my PSA be checked?
- My PSA level is still detectable. Does this mean there is still cancer in my body?
- My PSA level is higher than the last time it was checked. Does this mean the cancer has returned?
- How will I know if the cancer has returned and what should I watch for?
- What are my options if the cancer comes back? Surgery or radiation or medications?







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