

Becoming an active and informed partner in your medical care

Medical services have become increasing complex and fragmented, increasing the risk of medical errors. Further, physicians and nurses are under increasing time constraints.

The Basics

Honest communication and the timely exchange of accurate information are essential to receiving quality medical care.

Becoming informed about your medical condition allows you to ask good questions, recognize possible errors, and take advantage of emerging opportunities.

Providing key information in a concise way helps your medical team to fully understand your unique clinical circumstances.

When possible, seek an expert second opinion, which brings out the best in our health care providers – setting up a kind of peer review.

Be politely PERSISTENT when needed. However, be also respectful of your doctor's time; mindful that he or she has other patients, sometimes with medical emergencies. Inquire if this is a good time to ask questions, and how else you might communicate your concerns.

Lymphomation.org

About Lymphoma | Advocacy & Art | CAM & Life Style |
Clinical trials | Docs & Centers | Guidelines at Diagnosis | How
to Help | Side Effects | Support | Symptoms | Tests |
Treatments | Types of Lymphoma

Overview: Provide concise information (in writing) for your doctor, so that he or she can quickly get up to speed on your clinical circumstances, questions, and treatment goal.

What is the goal of treatment?

The treatment goal is often based on your unique clinical circumstances and the natural history of the type of lymphoma.

Your unique clinical circumstances:

The factors, such as age, treatment history, and the clinical behavior of the lymphoma, can often determine how to best monitor or treat it.

See also:

<http://www.lymphomation.org/treatment-decisions.htm#quick>

OPTIMIZING DOCTOR VISITS

Being an active partner starts with trusting that our questions are valid

– they are!

Be concise, honest, respectful, and prepared

TIPS:

- **Becoming an active and informed partner in your care – the basics**
- **Prepare for consults**
- **Communication objectives**

Prepare for Consults:

Bring to all consults:

- A trusted friend / relative to take notes, but also to raise the level of the consult
- Referral from your primary care doc
- Insurance cards
- Authorization (insurance)
- Contacts: emergency, other docs, local pharmacy

Provide to doctor / nurse:

- Diagnosis, treatments and medical history (concise)
- List of medications, supplements, and allergies
- List of symptoms / side effects

Provide a concise list of questions, such as:

- What is the goal of treatment?
Observation? Management?
Curative Intent? Durable remission?
- What is the rationale for your recommended therapy?
- What clinical trials may be appropriate for me?

Provide Test Results:

- Pathology report & slides
- Radiology reports / film
- Recent blood test results

Ask about:

- Are the interventions and tests covered by my insurance plan?
- The NCCN recommended therapies for your indication?
- The side effects to expect, and which should be reported immediately?
- Do you need any scripts for meds / tests / immunizations?
- Copies of test results?
- When is the next consult?

Other services to inquire about:

- Care managers
- Mental health professionals
- Pain specialists
- Physical therapists
- Nutritional experts
- Social workers / financial help
- Support groups

Communication Objectives

- To provide accurate information to our doctors and report symptoms or side effects honestly and in a timely manner.
- To help our medical team to understand our medical needs, our preferences or concerns.
- To receive timely access to high quality medical care and related services.
- To foster a mutually respectful and supportive relationship.

Second Opinions

Whenever feasible, do consult a lymphoma expert for a second opinion, particularly prior to treatment, or when:

- There is uncertainty about the best practice in your clinical circumstance
- There is uncertainty about the meaning of your test results, or the diagnosis
- You have an uncommon type of lymphoma and your doctor is a general oncologist
- Your oncologist has not yet discussed clinical trials.