

## GENERAL GUIDANCE ✓

- ❑ Ask for help.
- ❑ Bring a trusted friend or relative
- ❑ Prepare materials for visits to your doctor (see inside panel)
- ❑ Prepare written questions .

## ART OF ASKING QUESTIONS ✓

A good doctor-patient relationship requires honesty and diplomacy.

**Ask:** "Is this a good time to ask questions, doctor?" Provide the questions in writing – and help your doctor to understand which question have priority, so he or she can answer your questions when time allows.

**Honesty:** Let your doctor decide if a symptom or side effect is important or not. Communicate honestly with your doctor and the nursing staff.

### Worried about offending your doctor when questioning treatment?

**Ask:** *Could you please review the benefits of this treatment for me again so that I can write them down? Good. Now, could we talk about risks, too? O.K, so tell me again why you think the benefits outweigh the risks in my case?*<sup>1</sup>

### ... Or timing of treatment?

**Ask:** *Is it important that I start the chemotherapy next week? **Don't be afraid to tell the doctor:** My cousin's wedding is next week, and I'd like to go. Would it be O.K. to start the chemo after that?*<sup>1</sup>

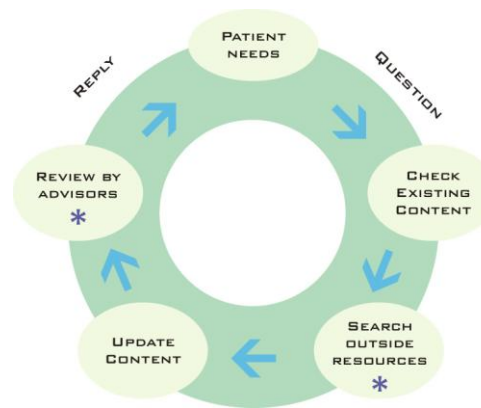
<sup>1</sup> Patient Power: Making Sure Your Doctor Really Hears You ~ By DEBORAH FRANKLIN

## ABOUT US

~ Education ~ Support ~ Advocacy ~

**G**uided by our scientific advisors, the peer-reviewed literature, medical professionals fighting lymphoma, and **patient questions . . .**

we continuously improve our website in response to **visitor questions** and **patient needs**



Visit us:

**Lymphomation.org**

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*Patient-centered . . . Providing evidence-based information on lymphomas and its treatments – independent of health industry funding.*

## PREPARING FOR DOCTOR VISITS

A checklist to help you, or a loved one, to receive optimal care and medical services

**Topics:**

*General Guidance*

*Art of Asking Questions*

*A Checklist for Doctor Visits*

*Care Managers*

*Special Services*

## PREPARE FOR VISITS ✓

Use this checklist to help you to prepare for visits to your doctor. Ask a trusted friend or family member to come with you, and to review this list.

- A referral from your primary care doctor when seeing a specialist
- Authorization from your insurance company when special services, tests, or treatments will be administered
- Insurance cards
- Emergency contacts - bring a list of names, addresses, and telephone numbers
- Family doctor and local pharmacy contacts
- Pathology report and slides - Bringing the slides is especially important when consulting an outside expert for the first time
- A summary of your diagnosis, treatment history, and medical history
- A complete list of medications you are taking, including the dose and schedule
- A list of the dietary supplements and herbs you may be taking
- A list of dates, locations, and results of all doctor visits, tests
- A copy of your recent radiology report, and the film from the last image test if available
- A list of allergies and specific reactions to each
- A written list of questions for your doctor. Contact us to receive our brochure containing a checklist of questions for your doctor.

NOTE: The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) could now make it more difficult for doctors to get your medical records from other doctors' offices.

## CARE MANAGERS ✓

**It's especially important to obtain help from a care manager if you have special needs.**

**Ask:** *I'm feeling overwhelmed right now. Can you provide me with the names of care managers who can help me to organize what I need to know and do?*

### Who are Care Managers?

Nurses specializing in cancer or other areas are "nurse navigators." They may be social workers; health care advocates; a family member or friend that you trust. Large facilities usually have a full-time care manager.

## ABOUT CARE MANAGERS ✓

Care managers can help you to make sense of what the doctor tells you. Care managers can help you to:

- Organize your information and point you to resources
- Find out what types of treatments and tests your insurance company pays for
- Make sure your doctors have everything they need before they meet with you, including your medical files, test results, treatment history files
- Understand what your doctor has explained to you about your diagnosis and treatment plan
- Answer any questions you might have after you leave the doctor's office

## SPECIAL SERVICES ✓

**Ask:** *I'm in need of special assistance because of one or more of the following: anxiety, depression, confusion, fatigue, finances, pain ... Can you please provide me with contact information for special services to help me adjust to or to overcome this problem?*

### Mental health professionals

(psychologists, or psychiatrists) - can help you adjust to the stress of living with cancer.

**Pain specialists** - can help you to improve your quality of life, and address problems related to your illness and treatment.

**Physical therapists** - can help you to address problems with mobility.

**Nutrition experts** - can help you to improve your quality of life, optimize your health, and reduce some risks related to diet and treatment.

**Social workers** - can help you find the resources you need, and provide direct support.

**Support groups** - can help by providing encouragement, and helping you to find resources.

**NOTE:** *Usually one visit with the doctor is not enough especially if you're upset. You need to fully understand and remember all the important and complicated information you'll hear about your illness and treatment.*

On our website, [www.Lymphomation.org](http://www.Lymphomation.org), we also have resource pages on these topics.