

QUESTIONS TO ASK THE DOCTOR

about your prostate cancer diagnosis

You can print this out and take it with you to the doctor. You can also check off the questions as you answer them.

- What other tests or procedures do I need (if you have already had a biopsy)?

 - What is my current PSA level?
 - How fast has my PSA risen (called *PSA velocity*)?
 - What is my Gleason score? _____ + _____ = _____
 - Based on my Gleason score, how aggressive is my cancer?

 - What stage is my cancer and what does it mean?

 - Do you believe the cancer is confined to my prostate?

 - What are my treatment options? (Remember that a surgeon may recommend surgery and a radiation oncologist may recommend radiation. You can get more than one opinion.)

 - Why do you recommend this treatment?

 - What are the benefits and risks of this treatment?

 - What are the chances for a complete cure?

 - How much time can I take to choose my treatment?
- Also ask for:**
- A copy of your pathology (biopsy) report
 - Name of a pathologist for a second opinion

QUESTIONS TO ASK THE DOCTOR

about surgery for prostate cancer (called radical prostatectomy)

- Why type of surgical approach would you perform?
- Describe the approach:
- How many of these surgeries have you performed?
- Where did you go to medical school/who did you train with?
- How many of your patients require additional therapy (radiation or hormone treatment) after surgery?
- How many of your patients have positive surgical margins?
- Will you use a nerve-sparing approach to minimize erection and urinary problems?
- How many of your patients experience long-term impotence?
- How do you define impotence?
- How many of your patients experience long-term incontinence?
- How do you define incontinence?
- What are the other risks with surgery?
- How many of your patients have undetectable PSA levels 5 years after surgery?
- Will I donate my own blood prior to surgery?
- What type of anesthesia will you use?
- How long will the surgery take?
- Can we schedule the surgery early in the week (when the hospital has a full staff)?
- What will happen if you find cancer outside the prostate gland?
- How long will I be in the hospital?
- How long will I need a catheter?
- How long will I need to recover at home?
- How often will I need follow-up PSA tests?
- What are my options if the cancer comes back?

QUESTIONS TO ASK THE DOCTOR

about radiation treatment

- What type of radiation treatment do you recommend?
- Describe the approach:
- How many of these procedures have you performed?
- Do you recommend hormone treatment prior to radiation?
- How many of your patients require additional therapy (such as more radiation or hormone treatment) after treatment?
- How do you define being “cured” after radiation treatment?
- What are the delayed side effects of radiation?
- How many of your patients experience long-term impotence?
- How do you define impotence?
- How many of your patients experience long-term incontinence?
- How do you define incontinence?
- How many of your patients have long-term bowel problems?
- How will I feel during treatment?
- Should I exercise daily to combat fatigue?
- What are the other risks with radiation?
- How many of your patients have undetectable PSA levels 5 years after treatment?
- How many treatments will I need and how often?
- How long does each treatment take?
- What methods do you use to ensure accuracy?
- How often will I need follow-up PSA tests?
- What are my options if the cancer comes back?

QUESTIONS TO ASK THE DOCTOR

about hormone treatment

- Am I a candidate for other treatments (such as surgery or radiation)?
- What type of hormone treatment do you recommend?
- Why are you recommending this treatment?
- How does this hormone treatment work?

- Why can't my cancer be cured with hormone treatment?
- How will the treatment be administered?
- How many treatments will I need?
- How long will I be on hormone therapy?
- Will I have to go back on hormone therapy again at some point?
- Will it be necessary (or is it an option) to have surgery to remove my testicles (called *orchiectomy*)?
- What are the side effects of hormone treatment?

- What are the risks of hormone treatment?

- Will I lose my sexual desire?
- Will I have erection problems?
- Do you recommend psychological counseling for my wife/partner and I?
- How will I feel during treatment?

- How long will it take for me to feel "normal" again after treatment stops?
- What can I do to fight fatigue?

- How will you monitor the progression of my cancer?

- What are my treatment options if the cancer progresses?