

GENERAL GUIDANCE

We want to help you to achieve two goals:

- 1) Make it easy for your doctor to determine your medical needs, priorities, and the **most appropriate treatment plan**.
- 2) Receive **timely access** to evidence-based **medical care**.

To accomplish this:

☞ **Ask for help** There's no need to go it alone.

During visits, ask questions of the secretary, nurse, or doctor about referring you to a care manager and other services. Contact and ask questions of local non-profit organizations as well.

☞ **Prepare materials** for visits to your doctor. (Also see our companion brochure: Preparing For Doctor Visits)

☞ **Prepare questions** of your doctor.

ASKING QUESTIONS

A good doctor-patient relationship requires honesty on your part, and diplomacy.

Ask: "*Is this a good time to ask questions, doctor?*" Or, provide the questions in writing – with space for answers – so your doctor can answer your questions when time allows.

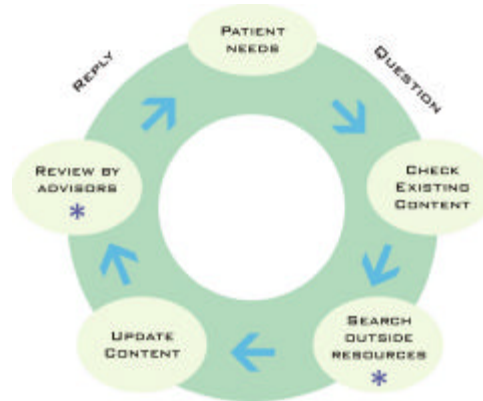
Honesty: Let your doctor decide if a symptom or change is important or not. Communicate honestly with your doctor and the nursing staff.

Find ways to show your appreciation for the skills and dedication of your health care team when it is evident.

ABOUT US

Providing timely access to evidence-based information, independent of health industry funding

Guided by our scientific advisors, and the peer-reviewed medical literature . . . we continuously improve our website in response to **visitor questions** and **patient needs**



Lymphoma tion.org

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Patients Against Lymphoma

~ Education ~ Support ~ Advocacy ~

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Patients Against Lymphoma is
a Not For Profit 501 (c) (3) organization

QUESTIONS FOR DOCTORS

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

Topics:

General Guidance

QUESTIONS:

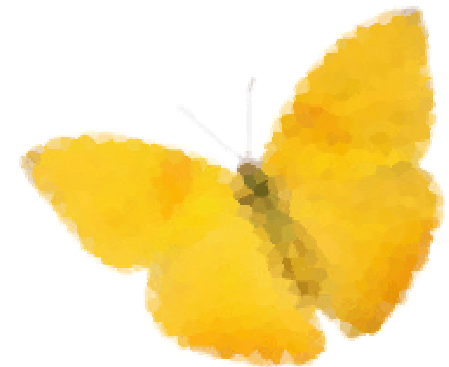
General

Treatment-Related

Side Effect-Related

Test-Related

Patients Against Lymphoma



Helping to make progress against the disease

GENERAL QUESTIONS

- How often should I schedule visits?
- What prescriptions do I need & how should they be taken and stored?
- Prior to treatment or tests: Ask the staff to verify that your doctors, the healthcare facility, and the type of treatment or test you are receiving are all covered in your insurance plan, and check if the tests and treatments require pre-authorization.
- Can you refer me to a social worker that specializes in helping with finances and insurance matters?
- What is the best way and time to communicate with you about my concerns? Phone? Fax? Email?
- What materials or resources can you provide to help me to become informed about the disease and the treatments?
- What resources are available to me to help me cope with the anxiety I feel?
- What other resources are available to me: Nutrition? Psychosocial? Sexual?
- May I record what you say on tape so that I can be sure not to miss what you say, Or do you mind if I take notes?

TREATMENT QUESTIONS

Treatment, and initial, consults should not be rushed. Ask your doctor to schedule a time that allows for a thorough discussion of all appropriate options. Bring your written questions to this consult, and provide a copy for your doctor.

- What is my diagnosis? And can you please provide me a copy of the pathology report.
- How widespread is the disease?
- Does the disease require prompt treatment and why?
- Can the disease be cured?
- What are the symptoms of the disease, and which indicate a need for treatment?

- What are my treatment choices?
- Are new treatments under study? Would a clinical trial be appropriate for me?
- Which treatment or treatment sequence do you recommend? Why?

NOTE: The rationale for a treatment can be especially important to you when there are multiple choices and there is no clear best approach.

- What is your level of confidence that the recommended treatment is the best choice?
- What is the goal of this treatment?
- What are the chances that the treatment will be successful?
- Is the collection of stem cells indicated before or after this treatment? When is the best time to consider stem cell harvesting, in general?
- How long will the treatments last?
- How long will it take for the treatment to have an affect against the disease?
- EXAMPLES: Antibiotic therapy for H-pylori can take 12 months or more to show a result against MALT lymphoma; and Rituxan therapy can take many months before an optimal response is seen.
- How easy is it to administer, and will it disrupt my normal life or ability to work?
- How durable is the response likely to be?
- Can this treatment reduce my chances of benefiting from important subsequent treatments?
- What toxicity and/or risks are associated with this treatment?
- What signs will indicate that the therapy is starting to work or that it is not working?
- What tests will be used to measure or gauge an early response to treatment?

SIDE EFFECT QUESTIONS

- What side effects should I expect? And what side effects should I report to you?
- What signs or changes should I report immediately? And how can I best contact you when this happens?
- How will I feel during therapy, and will it affect my normal activities?
- Can I have sexual relations during this treatment?
- What can I do to minimize risks during therapy?
- Will you prescribe medications to minimize side effects and risks? Neupogen? Anti-nausea? Etc.
- What side effects may I experience that are not dangerous?
- Will the treatment, or withdrawal from treatment, cause depression?
- What foods, supplements, procedures, or medications should I avoid during treatment?

TEST QUESTIONS

- What tests will you order?
- What will the tests show or indicate?
- Will you provide copies of the results?
- How often should I receive these tests?
- What toxicity and/or risks are associated with this test – or the repeated long-term use of this test? Is there a safer alternative?
- What changes or symptoms may indicate the need for tests?
- What test results indicate a need to initiate or change treatment?
- When is a bone marrow biopsy indicated?
- What steps can you take to minimize discomfort and anxiety associated with the bone marrow test?