

Cancer Treatment Question Sheet

Bring this to your visit. Pick the questions that matter today, and write the answers down.

NAME

VISIT DATE

ONCOLOGIST

1 Understand my cancer and my plan

1. What type and stage of cancer do I have, and what does that mean for me?¹

2. Was biomarker (tumor) testing done? What did it show, and does it change my options?²

3. What is the goal of this treatment: to cure, to control, or to keep me comfortable?¹

4. What is my treatment called, how often will I get it, and for how long?

5. What other options do I have? Should I get a second opinion or look at clinical trials? Would starting treatment now rule out any trials?^{1,3}

TRU-TIP · Ask about biomarker testing before the first dose

Testing the tumor itself can show whether a targeted therapy or immunotherapy is more likely to work, and which treatments are unlikely to help. It is not right for every cancer, but it is worth asking before treatment starts, because the results can change the plan.²

2 Side effects and daily life

6. Which side effects are most likely for me, and which ones mean call right away?¹

7. How could treatment affect my work, driving, fertility, or intimacy? What can be done before I start?¹

8. Which of my current medicines, vitamins, or supplements should I stop or check first?

TRU-TIP · Your port needs its own approval

A port or PICC line usually needs its own insurance approval and its own procedure date. If it is not set up early, it can push your first treatment back a week or more. Ask about it at the first visit.⁶

3 Costs and insurance approval

9. Has the prior authorization been submitted? Has it been approved? When does the approval end, or how many cycles does it cover?

10. Who is my financial counselor or navigator? What will I likely owe for each treatment?⁴

11. Are there copay assistance programs, foundations, or drug maker programs I should apply for, and how early should I apply?⁴

TRU-TIP • “Submitted” is not “approved”

A request sitting in an insurance queue does not start treatment. Ask two questions: was it submitted, and was it approved? Check back 3 to 5 days after it goes in. If it is denied, ask whether your doctor can request a peer-to-peer review and whether an appeal can go in the same day. Do not let the first “no” be the final answer.⁶

TRU-TIP • New insurance means new approvals

Approvals do not carry over to a new plan, even in the middle of treatment. Tell your oncology office the same day you learn your coverage is changing, not the day it starts.⁶

4 Who to call, day or night

ONCOLOGY CLINIC PHONE

AFTER-HOURS / ON-CALL LINE

NURSE NAVIGATOR / PHONE

NEAREST EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

FEVER DURING CHEMOTHERAPY IS AN EMERGENCY

A temperature of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher: call your oncology team right away, day or night.⁵ If you go to an emergency room, say first: “I am on chemotherapy. My last treatment was ____.” In an emergency, call 911.

TRU-TIP • Call before you take Tylenol

Check your temperature any time you feel warm, chilled, or just “off.”⁵ If it is high, call first. Do not take a fever reducer and go back to sleep: it can hide the fever your team needs to know about, and a fever with low blood counts can turn serious within hours.⁶

5 Answers and notes

Want to go further? Infusing Hope by Chuck Kinney and the SynquUp™ Oncology Emergency Life Binder help you stay organized through every cycle. Free tools: chuckkinney.com/free