CONVERSATION GUIDE

3 Questions to Ask Your Breast Cancer Care Team

Breast cancer treatment can affect many parts of your life, from your body and emotions to your relationships and daily routines. You don't have to wait for your care team to bring these topics up. **If something is affecting your quality of life, it's worth talking about.**

1. Why is my breast cancer treatment taking so long?

Breast cancer treatment often involves several different therapies and each may have a different purpose. A longer treatment plan does not necessarily mean that something is wrong.

Ask your care team:

□ What is the purpose of each treatment I'm receiving?
□ How long is each part of my treatment expected to last?
□ Why do I need treatment after surgery?
□ What is the goal of continuing treatment?

My notes:

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2. Why am I having menopause symptoms and what can I do about them?

Breast cancer treatment can cause symptoms that feel like menopause, including hot flashes, changes in menstrual periods, vaginal dryness or discomfort, changes in libido, sleep problems, and mood changes. You don't have to silently endure these symptoms.

Ask your care team:

□ Could my treatment be causing these symptoms?
□ What can we do to manage them?
□ Are there medications or supplements I should avoid?
□ What should I do if side effects make me consider stopping my treatment?

My notes:

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3. Can I have sex while I'm being treated for breast cancer?

Sexual health is health. Breast cancer treatment can affect intimacy, body image, comfort, and sexual desire. It's okay to ask about these changes and it's okay to bring up the subject even if your care team doesn't ask first.

Ask your care team:

□ Could my treatment affect my sex drive, comfort, or intimacy?
□ What can we do about vaginal dryness or pain?
□ Is it safe for me to have sex during treatment?
□ Who can I talk to if I'm uncomfortable bringing this up?

My notes:

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Remember: Ask early. Ask often.

You know your body and your experience. If something is affecting your quality of life, tell your cancer care team. You don't have to wait for them to ask. And you don't have to be embarrassed to bring up difficult or personal questions.

Bring this guide to your next appointment and use it to start the conversation.

Breast cancer treatment doesn't end when the initial treatment does. Some patients continue therapy for years while navigating changes to their bodies, hormones, relationships, and sex lives.

Amy DePue and Aimee Faso discuss what patients should know and why some of the most important questions can be the hardest to ask.

Listen now

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