

INITIAL DIAGNOSIS

20 questions to ask your doctor before starting treatment

1 Which specific type of breast cancer did my diagnosis confirm?

2 What additional tests, if any, need to be done in order to firmly confirm the diagnosis?
(Note: this assumes that your doctor has done the proper scans to determine your diagnosis, meaning: PET scan or CT scan, MRI and biopsies, if appropriate)

3 Is the cancer genetic? Have you done genetic testing to confirm this one way or the other?

4 Is it localized to the breast, or has it spread elsewhere in the body and thus metastasized?

5 Are you able to let me know what stage of the disease it is?

6 What does the stage mean and how should I interpret that designation?

7 What specific treatment path are you recommending, how will it be administered, what is the frequency and overall duration?

8 Why do you feel this is the best treatment option for me?

9 Am I eligible and would you recommend I participate in a clinical trial?

10 What can you tell me about the medication you are recommending for my chemotherapy treatment plan?

11 Are these medications the latest available or are these medications that have been used as standard protocol for my diagnosis and if so, what is the benefit versus a newer medication?

12 How do I best manage side effects of these specific medications?

13 Of the patients you have, that are either undergoing or that have undergone this specific type of treatment, what can you tell me about how they have responded to it?

14 Based on the stage of the disease, how long do you anticipate I will need treatment?
Will I need ongoing maintenance treatment as well?

15 What exactly will happen the first day of my treatment? Please walk me through the steps.

16 What can I expect during the first 30 to 60 days of treatment?
What can I expect 90 to 120 days into treatment?

17 What support resources if any, do you offer to patients going through treatment?

18 How should I manage working while on treatment?

19 What are the follow up tests that you will do throughout my treatment and what will they need to show? In other words, what does success look like as scans in the future take place?

20 What have I not asked, but should?