



Talking With A Doctor

You know yourself best

No one knows more about your body than you do. Not your spouse, not your parents, not even your doctor. So when you talk with health care providers about your health, remember that you have valuable information they can use. You know about changes in your body and about any problems you are having. Share that information. Open and honest communication between you and your doctor is one of the best ways to make sure you get the care you need.



It really is all about you

While you may be overwhelmed, it is still important to get the most out of each doctor's visit. Try these tips:

1. Be prepared.

It is often helpful to gather information about your health concerns — from the library (books and medical journals), trusted web sites or fact sheets like this one. The more you know, the more comfortable you will be talking to a doctor.

2. Organize your questions ahead of time.

You should be able to talk openly and honestly with your doctor about breast cancer to make sure all of your questions are answered.

Also, be sure to bring some type of voice recorder to capture your conversation so you can refer back to it later. These questions will help the doctor understand and address your specific concerns.

3. Tell your story.

When your doctor comes in, ask if you can take a few minutes to briefly explain your situation and concerns. Be as specific as you can. Then give the doctor your list of questions and ask them.

4. Give feedback.

If the doctor's responses were helpful, say so. This kind of feedback will encourage the doctor to talk with you, listen to you and continue to help you.

Stay in control

If you have just received a breast cancer diagnosis, it is possible that within minutes of telling you, your doctor will be talking about what treatment would be best for you. Take your time though.

This is your life and your body. You have time to make a treatment decision or even get a second opinion.

If you have cancer, this is new to you. The treatment options are likely new to you as well. If you need time to process all this information about your health, ask for it. You have every right to take whatever time you need to deal with your emotions, learn more and explore your options.

Waiting to make a treatment decision for one day or even a couple of weeks seldom makes a difference between a good and bad outcome.

Resources

Susan G. Komen®
www.komentoolkits.org

Pink Alliance
www.pinkalliance.net