

TALKING WITH YOUR DOCTOR

You know yourself best

No one knows more about your body than you, not your partner, mother or even your doctor. You know about changes in your body and any problems you're having. This is important information. Share it with your doctor. Open and honest communication between you and your doctor is one of the best ways to make sure you're getting high-quality care.

Related fact sheets in this series:

- [Complementary and Integrative Therapies](#)
- [Follow-up after Breast Cancer Treatment](#)
- [Making Breast Cancer Treatment Decisions](#)
- [What's Happening to Me](#)
- [Talking with your Partner](#)
- [Talking with your Children](#)



It really is all about you

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

- 1. Do your research.** Learn all you can from credible websites, like those listed below in the Resources section. The more you know, the more comfortable you will be talking with your doctor.
- 2. Organize your questions.** Preparing a list of questions ahead of time (to take with you) can help you remember what you want to ask and keep the discussion focused on the issues that are most important to you. To help you get started, Susan G. Komen® has a series of Questions to Ask Your Doctor topic cards.

You can download and type directly onto these PDFs or you can print them to take with you to your appointment. These questions can help your doctor understand and address your concerns.

If you can, you may want to take someone with you to take notes and discuss what you heard. Or, you may want to record your conversation (with your doctor's permission) so you can listen to it later. It's likely you will be given a lot of new information at a time when you may feel overwhelmed.

- 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 ask your doctor your questions.

- 4. Give feedback.** If your doctor's responses were helpful, say so. Or, if you're confused and don't understand, please speak up. Your doctor wants to help and will provide more explanations, if asked. This kind of feedback will encourage your doctor to talk with you, listen to you and continue to help you.

For more information, visit komen.org or call Susan G. Komen's breast care helpline at 1-877 GO KOMEN (1-877-465-6636) Monday through Friday, 9 AM to 10 PM ET.

Resources

Susan G. Komen®

1-877 GO KOMEN
(1-877-465-6636)
komen.org

Komen Breast Cancer Facebook Support Group

Visit Facebook and search “Komen Breast Cancer group” to request to join the closed group.

American Board of Medical Specialties

(312) 436-2600
Abms.org

American Medical Association – Doctor Finder

(919) 573-5445
Administratorsinmedicine.org

CancerCare®

1-800-813-HOPE (4673)
cancercares.org

National Cancer Institute’s Cancer Information Service

1-800-4-CANCER
(422-6237)
cancer.gov

Stay in control

If you’ve just been diagnosed with breast cancer, your doctor may be talking about treatment options. You have time to get a second opinion, think about your treatment options and make a decision.

Breast cancer is complex. A second opinion could:

- Instill confidence in the first doctor by confirming the diagnosis or course of treatment
- Give a different insight into your diagnosis and treatment
- Increase your options for care
- Give you a chance to meet with another doctor, who may be better suited to treat your cancer



If you need time to process all this information, ask for it. You have every right to take the time you need to deal with your emotions and learn more. Each treatment option has risks and benefits to consider along with your own values and lifestyle. Take time to study your treatment options and make a thoughtful informed decision that is best for you.

Communication

Doctors are just like anyone else; they want to do their job well. That means doing whatever they can to help you get better. While doctors may know a great deal about breast cancer, they may not truly understand or be aware of what you’re going through. Share your feelings and concerns with your doctor so they can help.

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