

Questions to Ask Your Healthcare Provider

FOR COLORECTAL CANCER PATIENTS WITH
RELAPSED/REFRACTORY DISEASE



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Tips for Your Next Appointment

To prepare for your next medical appointment(s) and to ensure that it runs smoothly, please consider the following:

- Make a list of your **medical history** (including allergies, medical conditions, previous illnesses and/or surgeries, and relevant family history);
- Make a list of **all the medications** you take;
- Collect and bring all your relevant **medical reports**;
- **Bring a notebook** with you to take notes;
- Consider bringing a **friend or family member** to your appointment;
- Consider the opportunity to ask for an **interpreter** if the appointment is held in a language different from your native one (if needed).

It may be helpful to prepare important questions and aspects that you would like to have clarified during your appointment. Use the following Q&A to prepare your list of questions and identify your concerns. The Q&A is organized around the most important steps of the patient pathway and you can therefore review those that are most relevant to you.

Some questions you may have might be addressed automatically in your appointments, however, be sure to bring any unanswered questions to your next appointment. If you think that some of the following questions were not answered or were not clear, don't hesitate to ask your healthcare team for clarifications.

Understanding Additional Testing and/or Treatment Options

Regular monitoring will inform whether your colorectal cancer is responsive to the treatment. When a treatment is not effective for you, you may need to explore other treatment options with your doctor. You may also have additional testing to inform additional treatment decisions.

If there are few treatment options available for your condition, you can speak to your doctor about the possibility of taking part in a clinical trial.

Possible Questions You Could Ask if You Are Not Responding to Treatment

If the Treatment Is Not Effective, What Next?

- Do I need to change my treatment plan or start a new treatment if the cancer recurs or if the current treatment does not work
- Are there any additional research options or clinical trials we could explore? Can you refer me?
- Is there any life style habit (nutritional, physical activity, psychological) I need to improve?

What New Tests Have to Be Performed?

- Is there a need for another biopsy to be performed?
- Do you recommend biomarker (mutation, genomic, or molecular testing) testing at this stage?
 - If so, what types of biomarker testing should I undergo?
 - If so, what types of treatments might biomarker testing identify?
- Are there any additional types of tests available that might open up other treatment options?

Benefits and Risks of the New Treatment

- Can you explain the benefits and risks of the new treatment/s proposed?

Where Can I Get Support?

- Where can I find additional information about my next treatment options?
- Are there any patient organizations with support groups?
- Where can I find additional information or patient organizations to support me?
- Are there any support groups available in my area where I can speak to other patients like me?

Glossary

You can find here below a short glossary of terms¹ to help you navigate this resource:

- **Cancer stage:** The extent of a cancer in the body. Staging is usually based on the size of the tumor, whether lymph nodes contain cancer, and whether the cancer has spread from the original site to other parts of the body.
- **Diagnosis:** The process of identifying a disease, condition, or injury from its signs and symptoms. A health history, physical exam, and tests, such as blood tests, imaging tests, and biopsies, may be used to help make a diagnosis.
- **Diagnostic test:** A type of test used to help diagnose a disease or condition.
- **Refractory disease:** A disease or condition that does not respond to treatment.
- **Relapsed disease:** The return of a disease or the signs and symptoms of a disease after a period of improvement.
- **Remission:** A decrease in or disappearance of signs and symptoms of cancer.

¹ This glossary has been built based on the definitions reported in the following documents: Lungevity Glossary: <https://www.lungevity.org/for-patients-caregivers/helpful-tools/glossary#g>; National Human Genome Research Institute Glossary: <https://www.genome.gov/genetics-glossary/g#glossary>; National Cancer Institute Dictionary of Cancer Terms: <https://www.cancer.gov/publications/dictionaries/cancer-terms/expand/D>

Acknowledgements



This resource is the result of the co-creation efforts of the [From Testing to Targeted Treatments \(FT3\) Education & Awareness Working Group](#). FT3 is a global, multi-stakeholder collaborative program with the shared goal to make precision medicine an accessible reality for all patients who could benefit from it.

This resource was co-created by building on existing good practice resources². The content is formulated in the form of an adaptable Q&A builder that incorporates precision medicine elements to support patients in asking the right questions at the right time. The resource is available to any precision medicine champions who wish to adapt it to a specific condition and/or local context. If you wish to receive an editable version of this tool to develop a resource for a given geography and/or condition, please contact silvia@thesynergist.org.

We thank the FT3 Education & Awareness Working Group contributors for their hard work in delivering this resource and acknowledge the organizations referenced below for their good practices to draw from.

² Personalized Medicine Coalition (PMC) [More than a Number: Better health begins with you.](#); Decibio, [Precision Medicine Landscape Map](#); MacMillan Cancer Support, [Ask about your cancer treatment](#); Cancer101, [Questions to Ask My Health Care Team](#); Cancer Support Community, [Cancer Diagnosis? What You Need to Know](#); MacMillan Cancer Support, [Questions to ask your healthcare team](#); American Cancer Society, [After diagnosis: a guide for patients and families](#); American Cancer Society, [Questions to Ask Your Doctor When You Have Cancer](#); Cancer.net, [Mobile application](#)