

Continuing the Conversation

about an anal cancer diagnosis



After you've been diagnosed with anal cancer, it's important to advocate for yourself through open communication with your healthcare team. Whether you've recently been diagnosed or your anal cancer has come back, this guide will help ensure you have a meaningful conversation with your doctor so that all your questions and concerns are addressed.

I'm newly diagnosed

Consider asking your doctor:

- What are my treatment options?
- How will my response to treatment be monitored?
- What are some side effects that I may experience from treatment and how can I manage them?
- What is my outlook?

My cancer has come back or gotten worse

Consider asking your doctor:

- What may have caused my cancer to return?
- What are my treatment options now, and how do they differ from before?
- What clinical trials are available to me?
- What are the potential side effects from treatment and how can I manage them?
- Has my outlook changed since the first time I was diagnosed?

Monitoring my cancer

Consider asking your doctor:

- What should I expect during follow-up visits and tests?
- Are there any symptoms I should watch out for?

Finding resources and additional help

Consider asking your doctor:

- Are there resources available that can help my conversations with friends and family?
- Are there any patient support resources for me and my family?
- Are there any local support groups or patient organizations that I should look into?

Notes:

**This guide is just a
starting point.**

Taking notes may be helpful as you ask questions during your treatment journey.



***Helpful Tips* to Keep in Mind During Your Cancer Journey:**

- Bring a trusted friend or family member to your appointments for support
- Share any symptoms or side effects that you may experience, even if they seem minor
- You are your own best advocate! Remember to ask questions and share your needs and concerns



***Helpful Terms* to Know When Talking About Your Diagnosis:**

Clinical Trial:

A research study to test investigational treatments that may, in time, be approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

Recurrence:

When cancer has come back after treatment

Squamous Cell:

Thin, flat cells that cover the surfaces of some parts of the body, like the skin, the inside of the respiratory and digestive tracts, and the inner lining of certain organs

Locally Recurrent:

Cancer that has come back after treatment in the same area where it first started

Metastatic:

Cancer that has spread from its original location to other parts of the body

Carcinoma:

Type of cancer that starts in the cells lining the external and internal surfaces of the body, like the skin or the inside of your mouth

Notes:



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