

Making informed choices about your care requires having the right information. It can be difficult to know where to start or what questions to ask when faced with a significant health decision. Take it one step at a time, beginning with asking questions about your diagnosis, your treatment plan, and other impacts on your life. Below is a list of topics that are easily missed in conversations with providers, that can help guide your decision-making process.



UNDERSTANDING THE SPECIFICS OF YOUR DIAGNOSIS

What is my exact condition or disease name? Are there any other names it is known by?

How serious is my disease or condition?

What is the short-term and long-term prognosis?

What caused my disease or illness?

Are there any symptoms I should be watching for? What should I do if I experience them?

Is there any genetic or genomic testing I should be aware of? If so, how will it impact or help treat my condition?

UNDERSTANDING AND CHOOSING YOUR TREATMENT PLAN

What is my recommended treatment plan? Why was this plan suggested for me?

UNDERSTANDING AND CHOOSING YOUR TREATMENT PLAN (CONTINUED)

Why are other treatment options not available or recommended for me?

Am I able to participate in clinical trials?

What risks and benefits are associated with the treatment?

What are the possible side effects of my treatment? How can they be managed?

Will you or another specialist oversee my care and treatment?

Where will I receive treatment (in the hospital, in the provider's office, or at home)?

Will I need someone to drive me to and from treatment?

What is the goal of my treatment? What does success mean?

UNDERSTANDING HOW YOUR CONDITION AFFECTS YOUR LIFE

How might the treatment impact my day-to-day activities?



UNDERSTANDING HOW YOUR CONDITION AFFECTS YOUR LIFE (CONTINUED)

How will this care impact my work? Can I work at the same level? Will I need to take time off for my treatments and recovery?

How can I expect my condition and treatment to affect my emotional well-being or my relationships?

Who else should I inform to help and coordinate my care?

What does my caregiver or family need to know about my care?

How much of my treatment and care is covered by my insurance? What costs will I be required to pay?

Who can I talk to about financial resources? Is there someone in your office available to discuss this?

SEEKING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE



Understanding the cost of care is the first step in planning for it. Even with comprehensive coverage, illness can significantly impact your finances. For most patients, the cost of treatment and care will strain their monthly budgets and decrease savings. While you are in treatment, chronic illness may also impact your ability to work and bring income to your household.

Many medical offices have patient advocates or financial counselors who can help you apply for government financial assistance programs and ensure you receive employment protections. Your provider may also offer payment options if you inform them of any financial challenges. Some non-profit organizations and programs may also help patients pay for medical bills, insurance co-pays, and prescription costs.

Be honest with your medical team about how you are dealing with care costs. It will not reduce the options available to you, but your providers want to lessen the impact and stress of worrying about the finances and will offer help when they can. A chronic disease diagnosis doesn't have to ruin your financial health.



The good news is there are resources available to you to assist in planning and managing the financial aspect of your care, both within your provider's office and from outside programs.

NATIONAL FINANCIAL RESOURCE DIRECTORY

Brought to you by the professional case management team at Patient Advocate Foundation, this self-help tool helps insured and uninsured patients quickly locate programs and resources for a broad range of needs including housing, utilities, food, clinical trial assistance, medical devices, pharmaceutical agents, and transportation to medical treatment. Learn more at www.patientadvocate.org/financial

- **Certified resources:** Each resource has been thoroughly researched to ensure that it is useful to patients.
- **Direct Help:** The directory focuses only on the resources that can directly impact and help those in need.
- **Powerful search:** Fully customize your search and filter results based on age, location, insurance status, illness or disease, and type of assistance needed.
- **Custom Description:** A custom description tells you exactly what you need to know to quickly assess a resource's usefulness to your unique situation.
- **Emailed Results:** Results containing a resource list with contact information can be directly emailed for future reference.



Curious about other topics? Our newly redesigned **Education Resource Library** houses our resources and provides straightforward information in a variety of formats to help you make informed decisions throughout your healthcare journey. Learn about health insurance, disability, medical bill management, and more by visiting our Education Resource Library today. Call us anytime at 800-532-5274 or visit www.patientadvocate.org for help!