

Questions to consider before using Alternative Treatments

Why this treatment?

1. Why am I considering the use of this treatment?
2. What do I hope the treatment will accomplish?
3. What are the advantages of using this treatment instead of standard treatment?
4. What are the disadvantages of using this treatment instead of standard treatment?
5. Will I be able to speak to other patients who have used this treatment successfully?
6. Will my family support my choice of treatment?
7. Have others with my cancer type used this treatment successfully?
8. Are there any Clinical Trials, Scientific Studies, or Reviews to show the efficacy of this treatment for my cancer type?
9. Does this treatment offer me a better chance of overall survival than standard treatment?
10. What are the likely consequences if I don't have this treatment?
11. Is there a Cancer Coach or Alternative Practitioner I can consult for once-off or ongoing advice?
12. Will my doctor continue to care for me if she/he knows about my use of this treatment?
13. Will my doctor address any concerns my family may have in advance of treatment?

Undergoing treatment

14. Will I need to go to a hospital, clinic or retreat to have this treatment?
15. If yes, how long will I have to spend there?
16. How will the treatment be given?
17. Who will give it to me?
18. How often will it be given?
19. Over what period of time?
20. How long will each treatment take?
21. What parts of my body will be targeted?
22. What (if anything) will this treatment do to my body?
23. Will I feel pain or discomfort during the treatment?
24. Can I go home immediately afterwards?
25. Are there any side effects associated with this treatment?
26. If so, what are they?
27. How will they be treated?
28. Should I change my diet or take any vitamins, minerals or other supplements?
29. Will drugs be used in this treatment?
30. What are the names of the drugs?
31. Why are these drugs used?
32. How many drugs will I be taking at one time?
33. Will the drugs make me prone to infections?
34. Will treatment affect my usual activities? If so, for how long?
35. Will I need to take time off work or adjust my work schedule?
36. Will I need help with daily activities during treatment?
37. When I am having treatment, can I eat all kinds of foods?
42. Can I drink alcohol?
43. Can I take other medications at the same time?
44. Are there any special precautions I need to take while undergoing treatment?
45. Are there special instructions to follow while I'm undergoing treatment or after the treatment is finished?

Following treatment

46. Will I have pain or discomfort after treatment?
47. How long will it last?
48. How can it be managed?
49. What are the possible side effects?
50. When would they start?
51. How are they usually managed?
52. Are there any side effects I should report right away?
53. Who do I call?
54. What symptoms – swelling, fever, nausea and so on – might be a sign of a problem?
55. Is there anything I can do to lessen the side effects?
56. Can the cancer spread, despite undergoing this treatment?
57. Will I gain or lose weight?
58. What type of activities should I avoid while on this treatment? For how long?
59. What kinds of feelings (such as sadness, anger, vulnerability, loss of control) am I likely to have after treatment?
60. Where can I find help coping with my feelings if I need it?

Long Term

61. Are there any possible long-term effects?
62. What are they and how are they usually managed?
63. Are there any special exercises I can do to help my recovery?
64. Will I need physiotherapy?
65. Are there any special instructions to follow while I am having treatment or after the treatment is finished?
66. How long will it take for the treated area to heal?
67. Will I need help at home?
68. Will I be able to work?
69. Is it ok to use perfume, deodorants or lotions?
70. Will treatment affect my sex life?
71. When will I know if the treatment is proving successful?
72. Are there tests I can use to check progress?
73. If so, what are they?
74. How can I access them?
75. What are the chances of the cancer returning?
76. What follow-up tests do I need, and how often will I need them?
77. Will I still have access to Tests, Scans, X-Rays etc if required?
78. Will I be able to change to a different treatment option if this doesn't work?

Family concerns

79. How will my spouse or partner react?
80. How can I talk about the changes in my body with her/him?
81. What can we do to help each other?
82. How do I talk to my friends and family about cancer and my treatment?
83. How are they likely to react?
84. What support is available for my family members?

FERTILITY concerns

85. Will the treatment affect my ability to have children?
86. Is there another treatment that might preserve my ability to have children without reducing my chance of long-term survival?
87. What (if any) are the risks of congenital abnormality (birth defects) in any children conceived after my treatment ends?
88. Do I need to be referred to a fertility specialist to discuss my options before starting my treatment?
89. Will preserving my fertility delay my treatment?

For Women:

90. Does this treatment present any danger to my ovaries?
91. Should I do a pregnancy test before starting treatment to make certain I am not pregnant?
92. If I am pregnant, how will this affect my treatment?
93. Is it possible to harvest eggs, fertilize them, and store them as embryos before starting treatment?
94. Can I still conceive a child when I am getting cancer treatment?
95. Should my partner and I use birth control measures during treatment?
96. If so, what kind?
97. What are the risks to me and to my child should I become pregnant during treatment ?
98. Will the treatment induce menopause?
99. Will the menopause last only a short while or will it be permanent?
100. Do I need to use birth control measures after treatment is over?
101. Is so, for how long?
102. If I am able to conceive a child after my treatment is over, will there be any risk to my health?
103. Once my treatment is over, how long would I have to wait before trying to get pregnant?

For Men:

104. Is it possible to bank my sperm before starting treatment?
105. While I am in treatment, will I still produce sperm?
106. Is it necessary for me to use condoms during sexual activity?
107. Will I still be able to father children after treatment is finished?



[Cancer Ireland](http://www.cancerireland.ie)