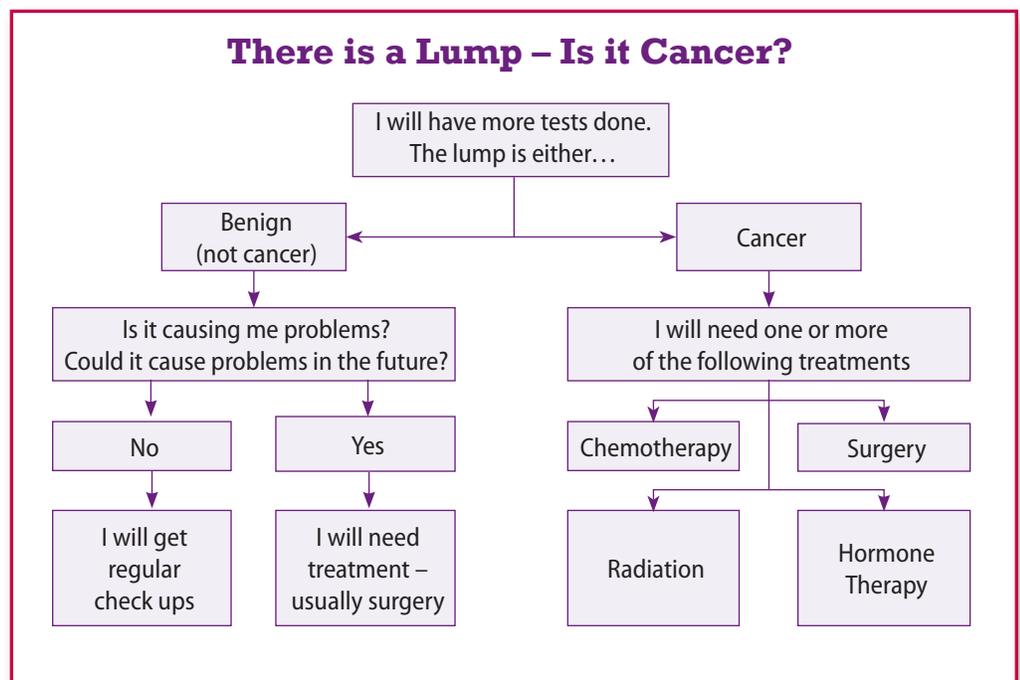




What I Should Know About Cancer Treatment!

What happens if my doctor thinks I might have cancer?

You or your doctor might find an area of your body with a lump or tumor that could be cancer. Here is what might happen:



Machines Used to Find Cancer

MRI Scanner

This is a machine that uses strong magnets to take detailed pictures of your body. It can be noisy and you also have to stay still for a long time.



CT Scanner

This is a machine that uses X-rays to take pictures of your body.



PET Scanner

This is similar to an x-ray. It looks at how your body uses energy. Cancer cells use more energy than healthy cells.



- » You will need to have blood tests. You might need to have a test called a "biopsy." This is when a piece from the area of your body where your doctor thinks there is a tumor is taken. It is checked in a lab to see if there really is cancer there.
- » You also might need to have imaging done. This is when you have pictures taken of different parts of your body. Your doctor will often want to take pictures to see if you have cancer anywhere else in your body because cancer can spread. There are different types of machines.
- » Cancer is a very serious disease, but you can fight it. It is important to keep a positive attitude.



I have cancer — what happens next?

- » Having cancer is scary for many people. It is very serious, but many people do survive cancer, and can still live a long time. It is important to have proper treatment to get rid of cancer before it grows and spreads. Cancer does not go away without treatment.
- » The sooner cancer is treated, the better the chance to get rid of it completely!
- » Your doctor can discuss which treatment can best fight your cancer. What works best depends on a lot of different things – like where the cancer is and how big it is. Sometimes you may have need different types of treatment.

Cancer Treatments

Chemotherapy

- » Chemotherapy uses strong drugs to stop cancer from growing. It might kill cancer cells or stop them from making even more cancer cells.
- » It is usually given through a vein but sometimes it might given as a pill. If chemotherapy is given through the vein, it can take a long time and lots of hospital visits.
- » You will have your blood tested often to check if the treatment is working.
- » Chemotherapy kills cancer cells, but it often kills healthy cells too. This is why you can sometimes feel ill when you have chemotherapy. It might cause your hair to fall out, make you sick in your stomach, and you may feel very tired. Your doctor can give you some medications to help you when you feel sick.
- » You also need to avoid other people who are sick with infections (like the flu) or places and things that are not

clean. This is because you will catch infections easier because your body is fighting the cancer. Your body does not have the ability to fight off other infections easily when you are having chemotherapy.

Radiation

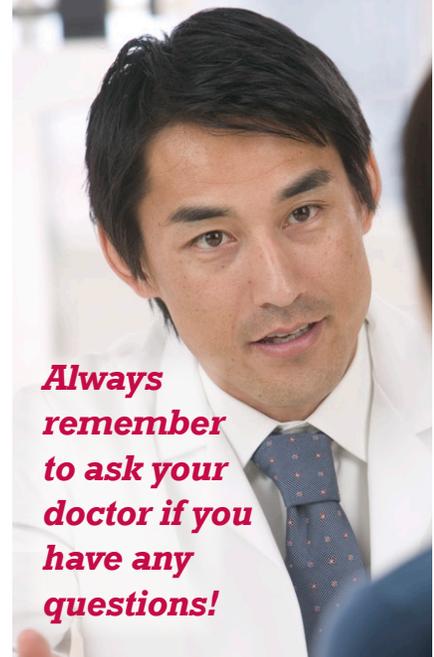
- » This is a special type of X-ray that can slow and kill cancer.
- » You will lie still on a table and a machine will move around you. This machine will send radiation to the part of your body with cancer. It will not be painful.
- » You will have lots of visits to get radiation. You will have time in between visits for your body to rest.
- » Like chemotherapy, radiation can also kill healthy cells as well as the cancer cells. How it makes you feel depends on what part of the body gets the radiation and how much radiation is used.
- » Many people become very tired. Sometimes your skin can get red and sore.

Surgery

- » This is when a surgeon (a specially-trained doctor) will perform an operation on you in a hospital. The surgeon takes out as much of the cancer as possible. Depending on the surgery, you may spend a few days in the hospital to recover.
- » You will be given medication to help stop any pain where the surgeon removed the cancer.

Hormone therapy

- » Hormones are special chemicals that make your body do certain things. Some cancers can be treated with hormones.



**Always
remember
to ask your
doctor if you
have any
questions!**

Perkins, E. A., & LaMartin, K. M. (2012). *What I Should Know About Cancer Treatment*. Education for Lifelong Health Series, Florida Center for Inclusive Communities. www.flcic.org.

Development of this material was supported by the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (#90-DD-0668, Fox and Kincaid). For further information, visit www.flcic.org.

