



Health Awareness

Five Questions Cancer Patients May Not Know To Ask Their Oncologist

(NAPSA)—An estimated 10 million Americans alive today have faced a cancer diagnosis. Fortunately, advances in cancer care and treatment have dramatically improved survival rates and overall quality of life. That improvement is largely due to patients who are taking an active role in their cancer treatment. The next step is to find out how to maintain a healthy lifestyle and properly care for your entire body.

“Many patients focus on questions about their cancer treatment, so they often don’t think about other facets of their disease,” said Dr. G. David Roodman, Director of Myeloma Program, University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute and Director of Bone Biology Center, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. “One important consideration that is often overlooked is the impact of cancer on the bone, which may lead to fractures and can be debilitating.”

When faced with cancer, it is important to remember that no question is inappropriate. Here are five questions cancer patients may not know to ask their oncologist:

Will cancer and its treatment affect other parts of my body?

Several of the most common types of cancer (e.g., breast, lung, prostate, kidney) can spread from the original tumor site to invade the bone, a process known as bone metastasis. Multiple myeloma, a cancer of the plasma cell, can also progress to the bone. It is important that you visit your oncologist



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to conduct a full medical examination to determine if your cancer has metastasized and learn how you can take action to protect your bones.

Should I be concerned about other medical conditions, such as diabetes or heart disease, and their impact on cancer?

Preexisting medical conditions put you at higher risk for developing complications throughout your cancer treatment. It is important you speak with the doctor who has been overseeing your condition as well as your oncologist to determine the most appropriate treatment option.

Do I still need to see my other health care professionals (primary care physician, gynecologist, dentist) since I am under the care of my oncologist?

It is extremely important that

you visit your other health care providers to ensure you are not neglecting other potential health problems. It is crucial to talk about your cancer diagnosis and treatment with your other doctors, as they make up your overall health care team.

How can I maintain intimacy with my partner after my cancer diagnosis?

While some people experience little or no change in their sexual desire and energy level, others find that their sexual interest declines due to the physical and emotional stress of having cancer and undergoing treatment. Just as it is important to speak with your doctor about the side effects of treatment, you must speak with your partner about your feelings and concerns so the two of you can work through it together and find ways to attend to this important part of your life.

Are there certain foods or drinks I should be sure to include in my diet as a result of my cancer or the treatments I am receiving?

In order to maintain the best possible health, cancer patients need to exercise and eat a healthy diet. Talk to your doctor about creating a customized exercise and diet plan—and stick to it.

For more information, visit www.FiveCancerQuestions.com, an informative Web site that provides education to patients and their families about the impact of cancer and cancer treatments on their bones.