



Get the most out of your doctor's visits



You, your doctor, and other health providers are a team working together to make sure you get the best cancer care possible. Here are tips to help you get the most out of your doctor's visits and take an active role in your care:



Before your visit:
Prepare

Make a list of questions to ask your doctor. For example:

- What type of cancer do I have?
- What is my cancer's stage, and what does this mean?
- What are my treatment options? What are the risks and benefits of them?
- What's the best time and number to call if I have questions between visits?

Write down a list of the medicines you take, including why and how you take them

Ask a family member or friend to go with you to help remember what the doctor says



During your visit:
Give and get health information

Be open and frank with your doctor so they can give you the right care. For example, tell your doctor how much or how little you want to learn about the cancer and treatment.

Ask your questions – start with the ones that are most important to you

Check that you understand what the doctor said by repeating the information back to them in your own words. You can say:

- “I think what you are saying is [repeat info] ... is that right?”
- “I want to make sure I understand [repeat info] ... did I get that right?”

Take notes to help you remember what the doctor said

Ask your doctor for a written summary of your visit and care instructions



After your visit:
Follow your doctor's instructions

Follow your doctor's instructions. For example, you may need to:

- Fill a prescription at the pharmacy
- Have another visit for tests, lab work, or treatment

Call your doctor if you:

- Have side effects or symptoms that get worse
- Haven't gotten results of any tests you've had
- Don't understand your test results
- Feel too sick to go to a visit
- Are unsure about your care plan

To schedule a visit at Robert E. Hardy Cancer Center, call 615-341-4383