



TNBC Discussion Guide: Questions to ask your health care team

Finding out you have triple-negative breast cancer (TNBC) can feel so overwhelming—but you don't have to take this journey alone. Your healthcare team is there to help. When talking with them, don't be afraid to ask these or other questions, bring up new topics, or ask them to slow down and explain something again.

If you feel like your questions aren't being answered, or you're not getting the right care, don't give up. You can share your feelings with your care team or switch to a different doctor. **You should feel heard and cared for in a way that works for you.**

- Ask the questions that are the most helpful for you, and feel free to ask questions that aren't in this guide
- Use the lined spaces to write notes on what your care team says
- Consider bringing a friend or loved one with you for support during these discussions

Questions to ask when you are first diagnosed

- What type of breast cancer do I have?
 - Can you tell me how TNBC is different from other breast cancers?
 - What does this diagnosis mean for me?
 - Is this a common or rare type of cancer? Who usually gets this type of cancer?
 - What stage is my cancer? What should I know about this stage?
 - What types of doctors and specialists will I be working with? What are their different roles?
TIP: Here are just a couple of the specialists you may work with:
 - **Radiologist** — a doctor who specializes in interpreting imaging tests, including mammograms
 - **Oncologist** — a doctor who diagnoses and treats cancer.
 - **Breast surgeon** — a doctor who specializes in treating cancer with surgery
 - Should I get a second opinion?
TIP: Your doctor may encourage you to seek a second opinion.
 - Should I get genetic testing? If yes, can you give me a referral to a testing center? (Genetic testing is testing a small sample of blood or tissue to find changes in a person's genes. Some genetic changes run in families.)
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Questions to ask about possible next steps, like surgery and other treatments

- Do I need treatment right away?
 - What are the different options for my treatment, and what do you recommend?
 - What will my treatment schedule look like?
 - Where can I learn more about these treatments?
 - Is there anyone else I should talk to about treatment?
 - Will I need to have surgery?
 - What should I know about surgery? Is there any reason I might not be able to have surgery?
 - Will surgery affect my appearance? If yes, is breast reconstructive surgery an option for me?
 - How much experience do you have treating TNBC?
TIP: Ask every healthcare professional you work with about this.
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Questions to ask about how your lifestyle and activities may be affected

- How will my cancer and treatment affect my daily life?
Will I be able to work, exercise, and do my normal activities?
 - (If you have children or care for someone else):
Will my cancer affect my ability to be a caregiver for my children or others? If yes, can you recommend any resources to help with caregiving?
 - Could my cancer or treatment affect my sex life?
 - Could my cancer or treatment affect my ability to have children?
 - Do I need to change the foods I eat? If yes, could you recommend a nutritionist or meal expert I can talk with?
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Questions to ask if you're looking for support

- What types of support can help me prepare for what is ahead?
 - Can you recommend any local or online support groups?
 - Is there a place where my family and other loved ones can go for support?
 - Can you recommend a counselor or other emotional support resources?
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If you are worried about building trust with your care team, you are not alone.

Your top priority when faced with a cancer diagnosis is to get the care you need. If you feel that you are not being treated with dignity or respect, you have the right to speak up. These tips may help:

- ✓ Bring someone with you to your doctor visits. They can help you feel less alone if you have to speak up for yourself.
- ✓ Do some research in advance. Some websites can be unreliable and misleading, but you can feel more confident if you arm yourself with information from trustworthy websites like [Cancer.gov](https://www.cancer.gov).
- ✓ Remember that while your health team has the medical expertise, you are the expert on YOU. You have the right to ask for what you need.

The questions in this guide are just a starting point. You can ask your care team about anything that is important to you. If they're not able to answer your questions, ask them to recommend resources online or in-person resources. Or, check out the resources on our website at [uncovertnbc.com](https://www.uncovertnbc.com).