

How to Participate in Your Cancer Care and Treatment Decisions

Resource Guide

What Should You Talk About With Your Healthcare Team When There Is a Decision That Needs to Be Made?

- ✓ All of your options.
- ✓ The risks and benefits of each option, including not doing anything at all.
- ✓ Your personal preferences, including what's most important to you.

What Is Shared Decision Making?

In shared decision making, patients collaborate with their clinicians to make care and treatment decisions. The process recognizes that you and your healthcare team both have expertise: your provider has expertise on the clinical and scientific aspects of managing your care, and you and your care partner or caregiver have expertise on what you're experiencing, and how the treatment plan fits into your life and needs.

What Are the Benefits of Shared Decision Making?

The process helps build a trusting relationship between members of the healthcare team and a patient, and it can lead to a patient feeling more confident when choosing a treatment plan. Plus, patients are more likely to follow through and participate in their care if they feel included in the process.

Educational Resources for People With Cancer:

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention CDC: [CDC.gov/cancer](https://www.cdc.gov/cancer)
- The American Cancer Society: [Cancer.org](https://www.cancer.org)
- Empowered Health: [EmpoweredHealth.org](https://www.empoweredhealth.org)
- Patient Empowerment Network: [PowerfulPatients.org](https://www.powerfulpatients.org)

Remember, not everything you read online is accurate or applies to your individual situation. Be sure to discuss anything you've learned with your healthcare team.

How Can You Put Shared Decision-Making to Work for You?

- Prepare a list of questions and concerns in advance of your appointments.
- Communicate what's most important to you.
- Learn about your disease and understand your treatment options.
- Ask for materials in the language most comfortable to you.
- Discuss the pros and cons of each treatment option with your team and come to a decision together that is right for you.
- Bring a friend or loved one who can help you follow along and take notes during office visits.

For many people with cancer, connecting with others provides emotional support and a sense of empowerment during a challenging time. Whether it's joining a support group or finding one-on-one support, personal connections can really empower you.

To view more Resource Guides and Videos, please visit [EmpoweredHealth.org](https://www.empoweredhealth.org).