

# How Can Empowerment and Shared Decision Making Improve Your Health?

## Information For Patients With Cancer

### WHAT IS HEALTH EMPOWERMENT?



Research shows that when people feel empowered, they play an active role in their health. This means that they feel that they have some level of control and say in their situation. Empowered people are more likely to develop healthy behaviors that may boost how long and how well they are able to lead their lives. When it comes to cancer, this kind of empowerment can mean several things:

- More people get screened and find cancer at an earlier stage when it's easier to treat
- Individuals adjust faster to a cancer diagnosis and have a better feeling of control during diagnosis and treatment
- Cancer survivors work with their providers to develop a quality care plan

### WHAT IS SHARED DECISION-MAKING?

Shared decision-making is when patients and their healthcare providers come together to make medical decisions collaboratively based on the clinical evidence (offered by the healthcare provider) and the patient's individual needs and preferences. This is especially important when there is more than one treatment option or when there is little evidence for choosing one treatment over another.

Remember, there is more than 1 expert at your doctor's appointment: healthcare providers are experts in knowing the benefits and risks of different treatment options and you are the expert in knowing what fits with your goals and day to day life. Not all care or treatment plans fit everyone. So, together, you and your healthcare team should create a treatment or care plan that appropriately addresses your individual needs.



### WHAT ARE 4 QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD ALWAYS ASK YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER?

When it's time to make choices about your health, you want to make sure that you have enough information so you're making decisions that are right for you. Knowing the answers to the 4 questions below can give you more control and help you understand your options. This is your opportunity to share your preferences, values, family or work situation, and more with your doctor.

Get ready for your appointment by writing down these 4 questions (or taking this sheet with you), as well as any additional questions you have. Share them with your healthcare provider to help trigger an informed conversation.

1. What are my options?
2. What are the risks and benefits of each option?
3. What may happen if I choose to do nothing right now?
4. \_\_\_\_\_ is most important to me. Based on my options, which one do you recommend and why?

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