

Shared Decision-Making Checklist for Patients and Caregivers

We often rely on our healthcare providers to tell us what care we need. But to get the best care, you and your provider make decisions together. This process is called “shared decision making.” Your provider shares medical expertise, and you share what you want out of your care. Then you make a decision together. Shared decision making can be especially useful to help manage slow-growing prostate cancer and understand your options. It can also open up a channel for communication and trust between you and your provider.

If your healthcare team has not spoken about shared decision making, you can still engage in the process.

Refer to this checklist to start the shared decision-making conversation. Download, print and bring this with you to appointments.

Before Your Appointment/Discussion: Think about What Matters to You and Write it Down

- What would you like to ask and know about your condition and treatment options?
- What matters most to you in life? What are your goals for treatment? Think about your goals for treatment, what matters to you. A clinician (e.g., nurse or primary care provider) may also be able to help
- you discuss your goals and wishes.
- Is cost an important part of your decision?
- If a caregiver or family member is involved in your care, does he or she know your goals and wishes? If not, discuss them.
- What are you comfortable doing to manage your condition?
- What don't you like about your current treatment (if applicable)?
- Do you have coexisting conditions (e.g., heart disease, metabolic illness, mental health conditions, musculoskeletal conditions) your provider should know about when it comes to treatment?

During Your Appointment/Discussion: Ask Questions; Express Your Goals and What Matters to You

Take notes that you can refer to later and/or ask a family member or caregiver to join/attend and take notes.

- I would like to make this decision together with you based on my goals and what matters most to me and on your expertise.
What I would like most from life is...
What matters most to me is...
What I am most afraid of is...
Are there decision tools we can use to make this decision together? How can I learn more about my condition and my options?

- Will these treatments cure my disease or manage it?
- What are the benefits of each option?
- What are the risks if I choose this option?
- What are the potential side effects of each treatment option?
- What might I have to change about my lifestyle if I choose any of these treatment options?
- What sort of time commitment will each of these treatments require? How often will I have to come in for tests and/or procedures?
- Am I eligible for nonsurgical procedures? What are they?
- If I choose to do chemotherapy, how long will it take to complete treatment?
- If I have surgery, how will it affect my life?
- If I have surgery, how soon will I be able to return to work?
- What is the healing process like after surgery?
If a family member also had cancer, does that affect my prognosis?
- What is my prognosis with each of these options?
- What if I don't want to do anything?
- What are the costs associated with each of the options? Whom can I speak with to learn more about the treatments and how I can pay for them?
- For my specific condition, what would be my best options?
- Are there support groups I can join for people with prostate cancer?
I don't understand. Can you explain this to me a different way?
- Can I contact you with questions?
- Can you give this information to me in writing?
- Is my decision between treatment options time-sensitive, or can I wait and think it over?
- What are the next steps?

After Your Appointment

- Keep the notes in a handy place so that you can refer to them later.
- Do you want to seek a second opinion to confirm your diagnosis?
- Consider what your provider said, and how each option would affect your life.
- If cost is a concern, are there assistance programs that might be able to help?
- If you are unclear on next steps, ask!
- If you need more time to make a decision, let your healthcare team (and caregiver if applicable) know.