

So You've Been DIAGNOSED

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS AND INFORMATION TO SHARE

Whether you have a troubling symptom and want your primary care doctor to help, or you have been referred to a specialist, asking the doctors you interact with the following questions will help you understand what is happening, increase your ability to participate in treatment decisions, and improve your patient experience.

- › What is my diagnosis? What is that based on? Who made the diagnosis? _____
- › Who is the doctor in charge of my case? _____
- › What kind of specialist should I be treated by—and when can that person see me? _____
- › Can you contact and work with my primary care doctor? Can all my medical records be shared? _____
- › Do you have an accurate list of all the medications and supplements I am taking, and can we go over the list together? _____
- › What are the pros and cons of the recommended treatments? Are there alternatives? _____
- › Do I need to decide immediately what treatment I will receive, or can I take some time to do research before I decide? _____
- › *If applicable:* Who in each medical office and hospital needs to know the name of my healthcare proxy and the name of the person who has my medical power of attorney? _____
- › If I want, can I be transferred from this facility to another of my choice? How do I arrange that? _____
- › What do you typically recommend for people in my situation and how much experience do you and/or the physicians you are referring me to have treating my condition? _____
- › *If you are heading into surgery:* Who is performing the surgery? What are their credentials and experience? How many of these surgeries have they done? _____
- › Do you accept my insurance? Will the doctors who see me and the services I receive be covered? What will my out-of-pocket expenses be? _____

Ideally, write down the answers to these questions so that you will remember them later. If it's not possible for you to write them down, see if someone might be willing to help you take notes. You can also try using your phone to make notes about what is said. Do whatever you can to retain the information. Your mind will be going in many different directions, and remembering everything that's said will be challenging.

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Join Ed Marx and Cris Ross, authors of *Diagnosed: An Insider's Guide for Your Healthcare Journey*, in supporting the nonprofit mission of Mayo Clinic Comprehensive Cancer Center. With your support, Mayo Clinic is able to provide unparalleled expertise in patient care and innovative research to meet the needs of our patients.

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