

Deciding on a Treatment

There are instances when a PSA test and a subsequent biopsy indicate that you have prostate cancer. The key question that must be determined is whether or not that cancer demands immediate treatment.

The cancer may be staged at a low Gleason score; the cells may not be of an aggressive growth pattern; your overall health may not permit invasive procedures and many other concerns may mitigate against an aggressive therapeutic strategy, but this must be determined in conjunction with your doctor.

Some questions that you should ask your doctor as you determine what type of treatment to have or whether you will have one or not:

Are you sure it's cancer? Can we get a 2nd pathologist's opinion that is experienced in prostate biopsies?

Has my cancer been properly staged?

Is my cancer totally confined to the capsule? What other tests, e.g. endo-rectal MRI, can be done to insure that the cancer has not already spread?

Do I need to be treated? What are all of my choices? What do you recommend for me and why? Will you refer me to other doctors in different specialties, e.g. radiation oncologist, medical oncologist?

Do all of the treatments achieve similar results? What are the potential side effects associated with each one? Is there a possibility that the cancer may return?

What effect will each treatment have on my ability to have sex?

Are there predictive diagnostics or tables that can indicate whether or not this treatment will "cure" me?

If I'm considering treatment for advanced stage disease are there molecular markers or lab tests to show which drugs will work best for my cancer?

How many of these procedures have you done and how often do you do them?

Does my race or ethnicity have a bearing on which treatment is best for me?

What restrictions will there be on my activities after or during the treatment?

How much will this procedure cost? Do you accept my insurance provider? Can you refer me to a service that will provide care if I do not have insurance?