

5 Steps for Selecting and Evaluating Your Treatment Team



Follow this series of 5 steps when researching and making decisions about whether your treatment team is right for you at each stage of treatment. You can use these steps when seeking a specialist to add to your treatment team, such as a nutritionist, or when you think you need a second opinion.



STEP 1: IDENTIFY CHALLENGES AND SYMPTOMS

- Metastatic breast cancer (MBC) can lead to a lot of physical and emotional challenges, and impact your day-to-day life. Almost all of these challenges can be addressed in partnership with your treatment team.
- Take a few minutes before your next visit to determine if there are any challenges that you think need to be addressed with your care providers. Ask yourself:
 - What personal goals do I want my treatment to achieve (raise young children, continue working, travel, etc.)? Are my current treatments helping me achieve these goals?
 - What symptoms (i.e. weight change, fatigue, anxiety, etc.) and challenges (i.e. progression) am I experiencing that are currently not being addressed, or could be addressed more efficiently?
 - Could I benefit from seeing a care provider or seeking a second opinion?
- Use these insights to prepare a list of questions and items for discussion at your next doctor visit. To better inform this conversation, you may also want to consider visiting the [Make Your Dialogue Count treatment team glossary](#) to understand the landscape of care providers who may be able to help.



STEP 2: DISCUSS IDENTIFIED SYMPTOMS WITH YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER OR CARE NAVIGATOR

- Talk to your oncologist, primary care physician, oncology nurse navigator and/or social worker about the challenges you are facing. They may be able to refer you to a care provider in your community or offer solutions to change certain aspects of your treatment.



STEP 3: EVALUATE RECOMMENDATION(S) FROM YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER OR CARE NAVIGATOR

- You know your needs best. Before acting on your treatment team's recommendation, consider whether you think it meets your needs. Key criteria could include:
 - Care provider's experience working with MBC patients and reputation in the MBC community.
 - Relevance of the recommendation to the challenge raised.
 - Ability to access care provider and pay for the treatment the provider is recommending (location, cost after insurance coverage, in-network status, etc.).



STEP 4: MEET WITH NEW CARE PROVIDERS

- If you decide to meet with a new care provider, be sure to prepare in advance so you can get the most value out of the visit. Be sure the new care provider has access to your medical records in advance of the visit. Compile a list of topics that you are hoping the care provider will address, as well as a list of specific questions you would like to ask. Prioritize these questions, in case you don't have time to cover everything. For example:

Topics	Questions
Treatment/Personal Goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I’m seeking a new or modified treatment because I’m hoping to [have more time with my family, continue to work, travel more often, etc.]” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “What recommendations do you have so I can reach these goals?”
Challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I’m currently limited from [spending time with my friends, being able to continue with my career, run around with my children, etc.,] because of [fatigue, anxiety, conflicting treatment appointments, etc.]” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “What is a realistic expectation to have when addressing these challenges?” • “Will a change in my current treatment move me closer to my treatment/ personal goals?” • “Is there anything you’d recommend I do - in addition to my current treatment - to help?”
Current Treatment Status/Precautions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I’ve experienced progression on my current treatment.” • “Before I make any decisions, I want to understand what to expect next.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Will this new treatment recommendation have an impact on my current treatment? If yes, what will the impact be? Is it worth it?”
Next Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Thank you for the recommendation. I will take this into consideration before making a decision.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “What are the next steps if I decide to pursue this new treatment?” • “Do you have any materials that I can take home to review?”



STEP 5: REFLECT

- Consider revisiting the answers to the questions asked in step 1, and ask yourself:
 - Have I been able to more holistically make progress towards my personal goals?
 - Has this new treatment played a role in this progress?
 - Have my challenges/symptoms been addressed?

