

Questions for your doctor

After receiving your Alzheimer's disease diagnosis, it's normal to leave your doctor's office not knowing what questions to ask. Your doctor is an important member of your care team, and you have the opportunity to ask about your diagnosis to help you understand the available options, benefits and risks of each choice you make. But one of the questions you may have may be, "What should I ask my doctor?"

The Alzheimer's Association National Early-Stage Advisory Group comprises individuals from across the country living with early-stage Alzheimer's or other dementias. Based on their personal experiences, they have developed a list of questions to help you make the most of your doctor visits.

The Alzheimer's disease diagnosis:

- What test(s) or tool(s) did you use to determine my diagnosis?
- What are you measuring with the tests performed?
- Can my symptoms be attributed to any other diseases?
- How did you come to the conclusion of Alzheimer's disease?

Alzheimer's disease:

- How will the disease progress?
- What is my prognosis?
- What can I expect in the future?
- How will my diagnosis affect my overall health?
- How will this disease affect how I manage my other health conditions?
- When do I have to stop driving?
- Can I still work? If so, in what capacity?

Treatments:

- What treatment options are available?
- Which symptoms are being targeted by each medication?
- Are there alternative treatments available?
- Which treatment option do you think best fits my situation?
- What kind of assessment will you use to determine if the treatment is effective?
- How much time will pass before you can assess the treatment's effectiveness?
- How will you monitor for possible drug side effects?
- What side effects should I watch for at home?
- When should I call you?
- Is one treatment option more likely than another to interfere with medications for other conditions?
- What are the concerns with stopping one drug treatment and beginning another?

Clinical trials:

- What clinical trials are available?
- Where can I find information about clinical treatment studies?
- Based on my medical history, what are the possible risks and benefits for my participation in a clinical trial?

Care team:

- How familiar are you with Alzheimer's disease? Will you be managing my care going forward?
- If I need to be hospitalized, will you be able to provide care?
- How frequently will you be scheduling me for follow-up appointments?
- Who else might you recommend to be part of my care team (e.g., specialist, counselor)?
 - What do they do?
 - What will their role be as part of my care team?
- At what point will you consider me unable to make my own decisions with regard to health care?
- How will you work with my care partner during the course of my disease? What information will be shared?

Care and support:

- What resources are available to help my family and I learn more about my diagnosis?
- What support services are available to help me live well with the disease for as long as possible?
- Are there any lifestyle changes that may help me continue to live well with the disease?

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