

We know that being diagnosed with breast cancer is overwhelming, so we've put together this checklist of questions to ask your surgeon, nurse or oncologist to help you understand your diagnosis.

The information and content provided here is intended for information and educational purposes only. It is not an exhaustive list of points to think about at this stage of your treatment and it is not intended to substitute for professional medical advice. Please speak to your medical team about any queries in relation to your personal situation.



HELPING YOU THROUGH & BEYOND BREAST CANCER

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR SURGEON, NURSE OR ONCOLOGIST



NOBODY SHOULD FACE BREAST CANCER ALONE

Future Dreams Breast Cancer Charity provides practical and emotional support for those diagnosed with breast cancer, promotes breast health awareness and funds vital secondary breast cancer research.

At Future Dreams House you will discover an open, inclusive and safe space where you can be yourself, access the practical support you need and benefit from peer support from the point of diagnosis, throughout your treatment and beyond.

For details on all our in-person and virtual services please go to futuresdreams.org.uk

FUTURE DREAMS HOUSE

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QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR SURGEON, NURSE OR ONCOLOGIST

○ WHAT ARE THE KEY THINGS THAT I NEED TO KNOW NOW? AND WHAT ARE THE IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS?

There is a lot to take in with a cancer diagnosis so you might want to start with these two questions, and then ask some additional questions further down the line once you've had a chance to take in the news.

○ WHAT TYPE OF BREAST CANCER DO I HAVE, AND WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT IT?

Strictly speaking you don't need to know this. However, it is helpful and interesting to know your type of breast cancer. There are various types of breast cancer. The type of breast cancer that you have will ultimately determine the treatment that you have.

○ DO I NEED TO HAVE ANY MORE SCANS OR TESTS? AND IF SO, WHICH ONES AND WHY?

Not everyone needs more scans or tests but if you do, don't be afraid to ask what these are for and what they entail.

○ WHEN WILL I KNOW WHAT TREATMENT WILL BE GIVEN TO ME?

After diagnosis, the medical team (usually the surgeon and oncologist) will put together a treatment plan for you which is based upon your own situation. There can sometimes be a short wait between finding out that you have breast cancer and finding out your treatment plan.

○ CAN I CONTINUE WITH ANY CURRENT MEDICATION THAT I'M ON?

It's worth checking that you can continue to take any current medications that you are on for other health issues. It's also worth asking whether you can continue on HRT/the pill/the coil. And if you're taking herbal supplements and vitamins, you can ask about those too.

○ IS THERE ANY SUPPORT AVAILABLE FROM THE HOSPITAL OR A CANCER SUPPORT CENTRE?

You might want to seek out some emotional support to help you at this difficult time. Some hospitals have support groups or support centres linked to them so it's worth asking where you can find this sort of support.

○ HOW WILL I BE CONTACTED ABOUT FUTURE APPOINTMENTS?

It's helpful to know how you will be contacted about future appointments – whether this will be email, by post or telephone. You can also take the opportunity to check that the hospital has the correct contact details for you.

○ WHO SHOULD I CONTACT IF I HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS?

Sometimes there is a breast care nurse whose role is to be your main point of contact at the hospital. If you're not given any contact details for someone like this then ask for them.

○ ASK YOUR BREAST CARE NURSE TO WRITE DOWN YOUR DIAGNOSIS SO THAT YOU CAN TAKE THAT AWAY WITH YOU



Visit [futuredreams.org.uk/information-hub](https://www.futuredreams.org.uk/information-hub) for further practical tips, expert advice, personal stories and signposts to further information for people impacted by breast cancer, provided by people impacted by breast cancer.

TICKING OFF BREAST CANCER

OTHER CHECKLISTS YOU MAY FIND USEFUL INCLUDE:

- Pre-operation checklist In collaboration with Dr Nazarain
- What to pack for your surgery
- Preparing for recovery after surgery
- Questions to ask before starting chemotherapy
- What to take to chemotherapy
- Newly diagnosed with breast cancer
- Preparing for chemotherapy

