

Questions to Ask Your Dentist Before Beginning Cancer Treatment

Your dentist may recommend that you schedule an appointment prior to beginning cancer treatment. This can help to address any oral health concerns before your immune system is suppressed and certain dental procedures would no longer be safe for you. Use these questions to help guide your pre-cancer care conversation with your dentist.

Dental appointments and procedures

- Do I need to schedule an appointment before my cancer treatment begins?
- How often will I need dental cleanings and checkups during treatment?
- How long will I need to wait or heal from my dental exam and/or procedures before beginning my treatment?
- If I have any serious dental health problems, will I need to delay my treatment?
- Based on my oncologist's proposed treatment plan, do I have any dental appliances that will need to be removed prior to treatment?
- Can I undergo dental procedures during treatment? Are there any dental procedures that I need to have completed before beginning treatment? After?

Coordinating with your medical professionals

- What is the best way for my oncology team to reach you?
- Is there any information about my dental health you think is important to share with my doctors before my treatment begins?

Oral health side effects of cancer treatment

- What impact will my treatment have on my dental health? Short-term? Long-term?
- What oral health complications or side effects can I expect from my cancer treatment? Are there steps I can take to minimize these now? Would you recommend any medications to manage these?
- I know that my immune system may be compromised during treatment. Are there particular issues related to this that I need to be aware of and/or situations I need to avoid or prevent?
- Are there any jaw and/or bone issues that I need to be aware of due to my treatment? (Note: This question is particularly important if you will receive intravenous bisphosphonate therapy.)
- When is the right time to call you if I am experiencing something that doesn't seem right?

Caring for your mouth at home

- What should my regular daily dental routine be like now? How often should I brush?
- Is flossing safe for me? How often should I floss? Should I use fluoride?
- What type of toothbrush is best for me to use during my treatment?
- Are there home remedies or solutions to try if I experience dry mouth? Are there options to avoid sucking on sugary hard candies?
- Are there any types of foods, beverages or dietary restrictions I should consider?

Sources:

Dental and Oral Health; American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO); 2016
Dental Provider's Oncology Pocket Guide; National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research; 2014
Important Disclosures: UnitedConcordia.com/Disclaimers

UNITED CONCORDIA®
DENTAL