

Winning the Breast Cancer Battle: Empowering Warriors and Guiding Loved Ones
By Karen Iverson

Questions for the General Surgeon

When you go to your doctor for appointments I suggest you take someone with you. This person can serve as your scribe and write down information provided by your doctor as well as the answers to the questions you ask. Through all my years of studying I have learned you can be more interactive if you're not trying to focus on remembering what someone says in order to write it down. If someone else writes you can focus on what your doctor is saying, reflect on that, and ask questions that come up in response to the dialogue.

Here are some questions you can ask your general surgeon:

-What are my options now that I am diagnosed? Do you recommend a lumpectomy, mastectomy, or double? _____

-How do these surgeries differ in follow-up and maintaining a cancer-free status? _____

-Is my cancer invasive or non-invasive? What does this mean? _____

-Are you in my insurance network? What will my expenses be if you're not? _____

-How many of these surgeries have you done? _____

-What comes first, chemo or surgery, and why? _____

-Do I have to have this surgery now or can I wait? Why? _____

-What is the risk of recurrence with this surgery? How can the risk be lowered? _____

-How likely is this to spread? _____

-What are the survival rates? _____

-What types of future assessments will there be: self-exams, clinical exams, scans, etc.? _____

-What will the treatment be after surgery? _____

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Questions for the General Surgeon

-When does reconstruction start? What plastic surgeons do you work with? _____

-What stage and grade are my cancer cells and what might be determined after surgery that is not showing in the images and biopsy(s)? _____

-Should I have genetic testing done? What type? How long will the results take? Do we need to wait on the surgery for the results? How will treatment vary depending upon the results? Will insurance cover genetic testing? How expensive is it? _____

-Additional Question #1: _____

-Additional Question #2: _____

-Additional Question #3: _____

-Notes: _____
