Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. Clinic staff are also available to help.

University of Washington Medical Center (UWMC)
Medical Records.................................................. 206-598-4344
Patient Relations ................................................. 206-598-8382
Pharmacy ............................................................ 206-598-4363
UWMC Operator.................................................. 206-598-3300
UWMC Paging Operator (24 hours/day) ............. 206-598-6190
Other ....................................................................

Seattle Cancer Care Alliance (SCCA)
Health Information (Medical Records)................. 206-288-1114
Patient Relations ................................................. 206-288-1056
Pharmacy ............................................................ 206-288-6500
SCCA Main Reception Desk
(weekdays 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.; weekends 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.)............ 206-288-1000
Other ....................................................................

You and your health care team

You and your family are part of the health care team that will work on getting you back to health or treating your condition. Your doctors, nurses, and other health care providers are also on your team. Because you are team members, we want you and your family to feel comfortable asking questions. We also want you to understand your treatment plan and how to take care of yourself at home.

We want you to be able to answer these 3 questions:

- What is my main health problem?
- What do I need to do about this health problem?
- Why is it important to do these things?

This booklet explains how you and your family can work with your health care providers to get the best results from the health care you receive.
Talk with Your Health Care Providers

Talk with your health care providers about what to expect at each step of your care:

- **Share your complete health history**, and tell your providers about other treatment you may be receiving anywhere else.
- **Ask your health care providers to speak openly** with you about your health. Having all the information you need will help you make decisions. You are the most important decision-maker on your health care team.
- **Learn more about your diagnosis**. Know the exact name of your condition, the medical tests and procedures you are having, and what risks and complications they may have.
- **Gather information** on your condition or treatment from your health care providers. Also visit these health resource centers at University of Washington Medical Center (UWMC) and Seattle Cancer Care Alliance (SCCA) to learn more:
  
  For all health conditions:
  - Health Information Resource Center in the 3rd floor lobby at UWMC
  - Cancer Library on the 8th floor at UWMC
  - Patient and Family Resource Center on the 3rd floor at SCCA
  
  - **Ask questions.** Write down your questions and concerns before your visit, and bring them with you to your clinic or hospital visit. (See pages 6 and 7 for some questions you may want to ask.)

Questions You May Want to Ask

**Diagnosis**

- What is the exact name of my diagnosis, disease, or condition? If this condition has other names, what are they?
- What can I expect to happen as a result of having this condition? How will it affect my work and everyday activities?
- Will I need to see a specialist? If yes, who would you recommend? Will I need a referral to see this specialist?

**Choices for Treatment or Procedures**

- What choices for treatment do I have?
- What are the risks or complications of these treatments or procedures?

**Recommended Treatment or Procedure**

- What treatment or procedure do you recommend for me? Why?
- What are the risks and complications of this treatment or procedure?
- How long does this treatment or procedure take?
- Will I need a family member or friend to be a caregiver (someone who can help with your care at the hospital or at home)?
- Will I need someone to drive me to and from the hospital when I have this treatment or procedure?
- Should I limit or avoid any activities after this treatment or procedure?
- What can I do to manage any pain or other symptoms after this treatment or procedure?
• Ask your nurse what infection-control precautions you need to tell your family members and friends about.

About Your Medical Records
Your medical records have important information about your health history.
• If this is your first visit to our hospital or clinic, ask your other health care providers to send your medical records to us. You can also bring in your own copies.
• If you have other health care providers, we ask you to sign a “release of information” form so that we can share information about the treatment you receive here with them.
• Bring the name(s) and address(es) of your other health care providers so that we can send them information on the treatment you receive here.

Report Your Concerns
• If you have concerns about your medical care or wish to report a safety concern, contact the manager of the department where you received care.
• If you are not satisfied with the response or results you receive from that manager, contact Patient Relations:
  - For UWMC, call 206-598-8382
  - For SCCA, call 206-288-1056
• You or your family may call a care conference with your health care team if you feel your concerns are not being addressed.

• **Write down the answers.** It can be hard to remember things we hear when we are under stress, or if we receive a lot of new information all at once. Bring a notebook to your appointments so you can write the answers to your questions while they are fresh in your mind, either during the visit or soon after. Or, bring someone with you who can write down the answers.

• **Know and follow the treatment plan** that you and your health care providers agree on. Ask questions if you are not sure of the plan or why it is important to follow it.

What Your Family and Friends Can Do
Involve a family member or friend in your care. Be clear about what you want them to do. Ask for their help when you need them to:
• Go with you to doctor visits
• Take notes or ask questions that you may not think of
• Help you gather health information
With your permission, staff may share treatment information about you with your family and trusted friends. Be sure to tell your caregivers and clinic staff what family members or friends you would like them to share this information with.

Be Involved to Get the Best Results
Patients who are actively involved in their health care tend to get better results. To increase your involvement:
• Ask family members and friends to help with your care.

Tell your health care provider about:
• Your concerns and symptoms
• Changes since your last visit
• Ways you are treating your symptoms or condition
How to get the information you need:
- Be direct.
- Be honest.
- Repeat questions if you don’t understand the answers.
- Repeat back what you heard, in your own words.

Know what medicines you take and why.
Know your medical history and treatment plans.

Know About Your Medicines
Talk with your pharmacist and health care providers to understand the purpose, dosage, appearance, side effects, and drug interactions of each medicine that is prescribed for you. Your health care providers can also suggest ways for keeping track of how and when to take your medicines.

Bring your medicines or an updated list of your medicines with you to every clinic or hospital visit.

Keep a current list of all medicines you take. Include prescription and nonprescription (over-the-counter) medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements.
Also keep a list of:
- Your allergies and reactions to food, medicine, or anything else, such as latex
- Immunizations and vaccinations you have had
- Names and phone numbers of your other doctor(s) and pharmacist(s)

Bring your drug benefit card when you come to the hospital or clinic.

Before you leave the hospital or clinic, be sure you know and understand these 5 things about your medicines:

1. **Purpose** – Find out what the medicine is supposed to do. You may also want to ask your doctor or pharmacist about any new medicines and if there are any alternatives to the prescribed drug.

2. **Dosage** – Ask exactly how to take your medicine: when to take it, how to take it (with water, with food, without food, etc.), and what to do if you miss a dose.

3. **Appearance** – Know what your medicines look like. Speak up if the medicine you receive looks different from the one you usually take.

4. **Side Effects** – Ask about any side effects you may have while taking the medicine, and what to do if they occur.

5. **Drug Interactions** – Help all your health care providers, including your dentist, screen for possible drug interactions. Give them a complete list of your medical conditions and all the medicines you take.

Help Prevent the Spread of Infection
These simple steps can help prevent you from getting an illness or infection while you are in the hospital or clinic:
- Ask everyone – health care providers and visitors – to wash their hands with soap and water or to use hand gel. Hand washing is the best way to fight the spread of infection.
- Ask anyone who might visit you, either in the hospital or at home, to wait to visit you until they are well. A visitor who has an infection, even “just” a cold, could affect your recovery or treatment.