

MAKE YOUR DIALOGUE COUNT

For many women with advanced breast cancer, doctor visits feel too short. It may be hard to know the types of questions to ask or which feelings to talk about. Here are tips to help make the most of the time you have with your doctor.

DURING YOUR DOCTOR VISIT:



Bring someone you trust with you. This person can provide emotional support and may help you remember important information.



Take notes. You can use them later to better understand what your doctor told you, look up resources or to get a second opinion. If you have someone with you, ask them to take notes if you are unable.



Ask your doctor to use simple words. This will help you better understand your disease and possible treatments.

BEFORE OR AFTER YOUR DOCTOR VISIT:



Talk to a nurse/social worker/patient hotline after you talk to the doctor. A nurse can help explain what the doctor told you and may have ideas to help you manage your disease. For example, refer you to a support group or informational website.



Find a breast cancer group in your area to attend a meeting or explore online resources. Talking to women with similar experiences, even in a different country, may help you manage your disease.



Write down your side effects from therapy before you meet with your doctor so you can talk about them. While on treatment, the more you talk to your doctor about side effects that bother you and are persistent the better he or she can help you manage them. Also talk to your doctor about what you're feeling, including anxiety, depression, or sleeplessness.

Advanced breast cancer and its treatment are complicated. While patients can support one another, each person living with the disease has a unique situation. You should and can ask questions when you have them. You don't have to wait for your next doctor appointment.