

## QUESTIONS TO ASK A RADIATION ONCOLOGIST IF CONSIDERING RADIATION THERAPY FOR DIAGNOSED PROSTATE CANCER

For the patient: You should review these questions and determine if the answers would satisfy a better understanding of what to expect and ease your concerns. If there are other questions you have, or questions here you do not need answers, you can either add to or delete from this list. Then print out a copy of this list to take to your Radiation Oncologist and ask that he/she take later time but before a future visit to address each question and either mail or email you the answers. At normal appointments there is only limited time and these questions are quite comprehensive and will require more time for the Radiation Oncologist to address.

- a) I have several questions to ask you that are very important to me and I would hope you will give me the time to address each of those questions. I made a copy for you, and if you prefer, I am willing to leave the questions for you to answer and return to me either by mail or email. Would that be your preference or can I ask them now? If you will be mailing or emailing me the answers, you may be providing me some answers today, but I would still appreciate answering them again with a mail or email return of the questions I am providing you.
- b) Will my health insurance cover all your planned treatment, recognizing that if I don't have supplemental insurance, I may be responsible for a co-pay?
- c) Do you think radiation treatment for my cancer is better than surgically removing my gland, and if so, why?

- d) If I have an enlarged prostate gland, wouldn't it be better to reduce its size for a better radiation result?
- e) How will the radiation therapy be administered? Will it be external beam or brachytherapy, or maybe even both? Please explain the reason for the form or forms of radiation you recommend.
- f) I've heard that often the cancer extends down into pelvic bed lymph nodes; will you be insuring that area receives sufficient radiation?
- g) If external beam radiation, is the radiation extended to seminal vesicles as well as lymph nodes adjacent to the prostate gland?
- h) How often will I have to come in for this form of radiation; every day, or every other day, and if this is going to be for a long time, how long?
- i) What should be my PSA level after the radiation treatment is over?
- j) How long does it take before my actual PSA level is determined?
- k) I've heard that there might be a "bounce" in the PSA level after treatment; how do we determine whether it is a bounce or that the radiation may have failed?
- l) What kind of side effects from the radiation should I be aware of, and what would you do to help those side effects be minimal for me?

- m) Will radiation therapy affect my sex life or my ability to have children?
- n) Can I expect to have a period of incontinence, and if so, for how long and what can we do to help return of continence?
- o) Can I expect to have a period of erectile dysfunction, and if so, for how long and what can we do to help to rehabilitate my penis to prevent atrophy as well as gain a return to an erection – I am aware that a vacuum erection device can exercise my penis but not really rehabilitate it, so which medications do you recommend to both help an erection as well as get arterial blood and oxygenation to my penis – Viagra? Or Levitra? Or Cialis? And if Levitra, do you prescribe Staxyn, the type that melts under the tongue? And how long do I wait if these medications aren't helping before considering penile injections with papaverin or bimix or trimix? Also, (if married) do you have someone on your staff that can provide counsel to my wife/partner and I together regarding erectile dysfunction in order that we both have a better idea of what to anticipate so that neither of us are surprised by this possible side effect of treatment on my being unable to attain an erection for sexual intercourse?
- p) What are the chances that radiation therapy will get rid of all my cancer?
- q) Do my diagnostics indicate I may need any other treatment like androgen deprivation medications for a period of time to accompany the radiation? If so, what medications, what does each medication perform, what are the side effects I might expect from

each such medication, and for how long do I have to take these medications?

- r) Can I drive myself when coming in for treatment?
- s) Will I be able to continue my normal activities even during radiation?
- t) Do I need to take any special precautions, like staying out of the sun or avoiding people with infectious diseases?
- u) While I am being treated with radiation, do I have to stay clear of pregnant women or children or anyone for any reason?
- v) Do I need a special diet during or after my treatment?
- w) Can I exercise during treatment?
- x) Will side effects change my appearance? If so, will the changes be permanent or temporary? If temporary, how long will they last?
- y) How often do I need to return for checkups?
- z) What are the chances that the cancer will come back, and if it does come back, then what?

aa) If it is later considered that my cancer has metastasized, is it your practice to refer me to a Medical Oncologist for further treatment that will likely be various medications? If not, why not?

Do you know of a local prostate cancer support group I could go to to be among other men who have been or are being treated for this disease?

**ADDED INFORMATION REGARDING WHAT “MAY” BE EXPERIENCED FOLLOWING RADIATION TREATMENT – NOT NECESSARILY WILL: <http://tinyurl.com/z73pfq7> KEEP IN MIND THAT YOU HAVE BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH A CANCER. UNFORTUNATELY, SIDE EFFECTS ACCOMPANY MOST TREATMENT OPTIONS. THE IMPORTANCE HERE IS THAT YOU ARE AT LEAST AWARE OF THOSE SIDE EFFECTS, BUT THEY COME WITH SAVING YOUR LIFE!**