



# Starting the Conversation

How to Talk to Your Doctor About Your Serious Illness



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# How to Start the Conversation

Talking about a serious illness isn't always easy.

If you have been diagnosed with a serious illness, you may assume that your doctor will start a conversation about the progression of your disease, your future prognosis and options for treatment.

However, your doctor may be waiting for you to ask the right questions. This sometimes means that these crucial conversations are delayed until a moment of crisis, such as a health emergency.

Rather than waiting until a crisis unfolds, start the conversation with your doctor now. The information in this brochure can provide a way to begin communicating openly and honestly with each other.

**The conversation is bigger than just you and your doctor. It's important to involve family members, caretakers and other loved ones as you consider the course of your illness and make plans for the future.**

## TO START, ASK YOUR DOCTOR:

- Is there a cure for my illness?
- If my illness does not have a cure, are there treatments that can slow its progression?
- Are there treatments available that can keep me comfortable as my illness progresses?
- If my illness continues to worsen, when will it be time to consider supportive care?
- Will you tell me when it is time to begin hospice care?
- If and when I decide that I no longer wish to pursue active treatment for my disease, will you continue to serve as my physician?

Your doctor won't be able to tell you exactly how a specific treatment may affect you. However, by gathering all the information, you can make informed decisions about your treatment, care and wishes.

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If you have been diagnosed with a serious illness, it's important to have open communication with your physician about your goals and concerns. Only then can you make an informed decision about your treatment. **For questions, call Advanced Care Management at 217-788-3360.**