



Sassy Survivor Breast Health Alliance

Breast Cancer & Your Heart

8 Questions to Ask Your Medical Team

Be informed. Be empowered. Be your own best advocate.

1. Could any of my cancer treatments affect my heart or blood vessels?

Ask about chemotherapy, targeted therapy, hormone therapy and radiation, and whether any may affect your heart.

2. What is my cardiovascular risk before treatment begins?

Share your personal and family history, including high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, high cholesterol and tobacco use. Ask whether you need heart testing before treatment.

3. Should I have a baseline heart test?

Depending on your treatment and risk factors, your team may recommend an echocardiogram, ECG/EKG, blood tests or other testing before treatment.

4. How will my heart be monitored during treatment?

If you are receiving a treatment known to affect the heart, ask how and how often your heart will be checked.

Bring this handout to your appointment and write down the answers.



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Questions 5-8 + Know the Signs

5. If I need radiation, what will be done to protect my heart?

Ask what techniques will be used to minimize radiation exposure to the heart, especially with left-sided breast cancer.

6. What symptoms should I report immediately?

Ask about shortness of breath, chest pain or pressure, swelling, rapid weight gain, unusual fatigue, palpitations, dizziness or fainting.

7. Do I need long-term heart follow-up after treatment ends?

Some cardiovascular effects can appear months or years later. Ask what follow-up is appropriate and whether you should see a cardiologist or cardio-oncologist.

8. How will all of my healthcare providers work together?

Make sure your oncology team, primary care provider and, when appropriate, cardiology team communicate and have a record of your cancer treatments.

KNOW THE SYMPTOMS - SPEAK UP

Contact your healthcare team about new or worsening shortness of breath, chest pain or pressure, swelling, rapid weight gain from fluid, unusual fatigue, palpitations, dizziness or fainting.

Seek immediate medical care for severe chest pain, severe shortness of breath, fainting, or other emergency symptoms.

“If I can save one life through this journey, then my life has not been in vain.”

DeBorrah Carter, CEO/Founder | Sassy Survivor Breast Health Alliance