

## Talking to the Doctor

It is important that you and your loved one understand the planned treatment and possible side effects. You may feel uncomfortable talking with a doctor, or you might be worried that your loved one would not understand what the doctor is saying. Here are some suggestions to help you prepare for a medical appointment:



### ***Before each appointment***

- If possible, the patient should appoint a key spokesperson.
- This person should go with the patient to all appointments if possible, and be the key contact to share information to families and friends.
- Interpreter services are available at all times for any patients whose primary language is not English. It is best to make arrangements for an interpreter before the appointment. There might be a fee applicable for interpretation services. Please let the clinic know if this is necessary.
- Write down key concerns and questions. Speak with other family members to know their concerns as well.
- Some questions you may want to ask can be:
  - What type of cancer does my loved one have?
  - What is the stage of the cancer?
  - Has the cancer spread?
  - What is the goal of the treatment? To cure or to control an incurable cancer?
  - What is the recommended treatment? Are there other treatment options?
  - How often will treatment be given and how long will it last?
  - What are the side effects? How can they be managed?
  - When should I contact the doctor or nurse? How do I contact them?



### ***At the start of the appointment***

- Tell the doctor that you have questions to ask. This helps the doctor to set aside time to answer your questions.
- Ask the most important questions first.



### ***During the appointment***

- Write down the doctor's answers. If you don't understand something, ask the doctor to explain again or draw a diagram, if you think it will help.
- Keep your notes in a folder with other medical information you have gathered.



### ***After the appointment***

- You can call the clinic to clarify any other matters. The nurses may also be able to answer many of your questions.