

Ten questions that patients should ask their doctors:

1. What is causing my problem?
2. Is there more than one disease or condition that could be causing my symptoms?
3. What tests will you do to diagnose the problem?
4. How good are the tests for diagnosing the problem and the conditions?
5. How safe are the tests?
6. What is the likely course of my condition? What is the long-term outlook with and without treatment?
7. What are my treatment options? How effective is each treatment option? What are the benefits versus risks of each treatment option?
8. If my symptoms worsen, what should I do on my own? When should I contact you?
9. Are you aware of each of the medications that I am taking? Can they interact with the medications you are prescribing for me?
10. Should we monitor for side effects of the medications that you are prescribing or for their interactions with other medications I am taking?

(from MedicineNet)

Questions to ask if you need treatment:

- What are my treatment options?
- How long will the treatment take?
- What is the cost of the treatment?
- Which treatment is most common for my disease or condition?
- Is there a generic form of my treatment and is it as effective?
- What side effects can I expect?
- What risks and benefits are associated with the treatment?
- What would happen if I didn't have any treatment?
- What would happen if I delay my treatment?
- Is there anything I should avoid during treatment?
- What should I do if I have side effects?
- How will I know if the medication is working?
- What would I do if I miss a dose of medication?
- Will my job or lifestyle be affected?
- What is my short-term and long-term prognosis?

(Source: Agency of Healthcare Research and Quality)

Questions to ask if you need surgery:

- Why do I need surgery?
- What surgical procedure are you recommending?
- Is there more than one way of perform this surgery?
- Are there alternatives to surgery?
- How much will surgery cost?
- What are the benefits of having this surgery?
- What are the risks of having this surgery?
- What if I don't have this surgery?
- Where can I get a second opinion?
- What kind of anesthesia will I need?
- How long will it take me to recover?
- What are your qualifications?
- How much experience do you have performing this surgery?
- How long will I be in the hospital?

(Source: Agency of Healthcare Research and Quality)

How do you express concerns when you talk to your doctor or healthcare team? The best way is to use CUS words, which are currently being taught at the **Agency of Healthcare Research and Quality** national TeamSTEPPs training sessions for healthcare providers. We patients and family members are expected to use the same language to communicate our concerns with the healthcare providers when our safety is at issue.

Use CUS words in the following order: (1) start with "I am concerned"; (2) if that does not work, move onto "I am uncomfortable!"; (3) The last resort is "This is a safety issue! Stop!" The CUS words may save your live and your loved ones' lives.

I am **C** ONCERNED!
I am **U** NCOMFORTABLE!
This is a **S** AFETY ISSUE!
"Stop the Line"

(Source: Agency of Healthcare Research and Quality)