

Prostate Cancer / Chemotherapy Questions.

This was a list of questions one could ask on a similar journey.

What is a DRE test and what does it involve.

A digital rectal examination is used to see if you have a prostate problem. The doctor will ask you to lie on your side on an examination table with your knees brought up towards your chest. They will then slide a finger into your back passage wearing gloves to feel your prostate.

What questions to ask about the DRE Test.

How did my prostate feel?
Was it of normal size and smooth for my age?
Was it enlarged?
Was it hard or lumpy?
Is one able to feel the whole prostate gland?
If it feels normal does that mean I am ok?
Can I have a PSA blood test? (Everyone over 50 is entitled to this in Scotland)

What is a PSA blood test and what does a high PSA level mean?

A PSA blood test measures the amount of prostate specific antigen in your blood. A high PSA level can be caused by many things, including a urinary tract infection, an enlarged prostate, aging and in some cases prostate cancer.

What questions to ask about a PSA blood test.

How long will it take to get the results of my PSA blood test?
What is the normal level for a PSA blood test for someone my age?
What does my PSA blood level test tell you about me?
What level of a PSA blood test indicates cancer is present?
Is there anything I can do to lower my PSA level?
What treatment can I receive to lower my PSA level?
What are the next steps for me as regards the findings from my PSA level test?

What is a Biopsy for prostate cancer?

A transrectal biopsy is where a needle is inserted through the rectum with the help of an ultrasonic probe to look for cancer cells in your prostate. This helps to diagnose prostate cancer. They take numerous samples which are sent off to a laboratory to viewed under a microscope.

What questions to ask about having a biopsy.

How will it be conducted?
What preparation do I have prior to the biopsy?
How long will it take?
Will it be painful?
What are the risks of having a biopsy?
What are the side effects of having a biopsy?

<p>When will I get the results?</p>
<p>What is an MRI Scan for prostate cancer. A magnetic resonance imaging scan (MRI) is a non-invasive imaging test that uses radio waves and a magnetic field to create detailed pictures of the prostate and surrounding organs.</p>
<p>What questions to ask about having an MRI Scan. How will it be conducted? What preparation do I have prior to the MRI Scan? How long will it take? Will it be painful? What are the risks of having an MRI Scan? What are the side effects of having an MRI Scan? When will I get the results? What does the results of my MRI Scan tell you about me? If the cancer is contained in the prostate only, can I be cured? If the cancer is in and out with the prostate, can it be cured? When is it determined that your cancer is incurable? The cancer if it has spread to other areas how serious is this? What is my life expectancy with the results of the scan? What further medication can I take to fight the cancer?</p>
<p>Deacetyl SR Hormone 6 monthly injections at local surgery. This vastly reduced my PSA Level. Could this be an option for me?</p>
<p>It a 6 monthly hormone injection as above is offered to me to reduce my PSA level. What does this mean? Where will it be done? What is the risk of having this medication? What will be the side effects? What will be the expected reduction in my PSA level with this injection?</p>
<p>Chemotherapy Docetaxel Infusion This was my infusion.</p>
<p>What type of Chemotherapy and other medication will I be offered. Can I take everything that is on offer? What is the preparation I need to do prior to chemotherapy? What is involved in the process of me having chemotherapy? What are the risks involved in having chemotherapy? What are the side effects of having chemotherapy? Can my medication be altered due to possible side effects? How painful will it be? How long will it take? Where will it be done?</p>

What if I cannot deal with the side effects of chemotherapy?
How will I know the chemotherapy is working?
Will I be offered further chemotherapy in the future if my cancer grows?

What post chemotherapy medication will I be offered?

What will be the risks of taking this medication?
What will be the side effects of this treatment?
How long will I have to take this medication?
How will my condition be monitored in the future?

My Medication during and after Chemotherapy

What was my pre-Chemotherapy Treatment.

- Decapeptyl SR Hormone 6 monthly injections at local surgery. This vastly reduced my PSA Level.

What was my Chemotherapy Treatment.

- Docetaxel Infusion with your blood taken 2 days before hand to confirm your cells are at a safe level to have the chemotherapy.
- Dexamethasone Tablets 2 taken 12hrs before infusion.
- Dexamethasone Tablets 2 taken 03hrs before infusion.
- Dexamethasone Tablets 2 taken 01hrs before infusion.

How it is applied

- Anti sickness infusion followed by Docetaxel Infusion – 2 Hours in total. This is on a drip.
One can use the local WC as the drip is on wheels.

My other Cancer Treatments I was taking during my chemotherapy sessions were.

- Decapeptyl SR Hormone 6 monthly injections at local surgery
- Tamsulosin Hydrochloride due to bladder issues. 1 a day
- Prednisolone Steroid Tablets 1 tablet twice a day
- Darolutamide Hormone Tablets 2 tablets twice a day
- Filgrastim Injections (this is to treat low white blood cells caused by the infusions) on days 3 to 9 whilst having infusions this was initially by a nurse but then my wife administered.
- Magnesium for the bones.

What side effects could one possibly experience during chemotherapy.

- Hair loss, mouth sores, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea , increased risk of infection , easy bruising bleeding and fatigue .

What was my side effects when I had my chemotherapy.

- Hair loss, nausea, weight gain, extreme fatigue and sore hands and feet.

What was my medication post Chemotherapy.

- Decapeptyl SR 6 Monthly Hormone Injections at local surgery

- Tamsulosin Tablets one a day for bladder issues.
- Darolutamide Hormone tablets 2 twice a day – My main side effect with these were hot flushes.
- Clonidine Tablets for hot flushes which I had to stop taking to its side effects namely dizzy spells.
- Sertraline Anti-Depressants

What side effects did I have post Chemotherapy.

- Hot flushes, fatigue & mood swings all due to the Darolutamide Treatment.

My other health conditions at the time were.

- Gastric Reflux affecting my throat and stomach.
- Left knee with a complex tear on the posterior horn which likely requires surgery.
- Osteoporosis on which I had a couple of osteoporotic fractures in my lower spine just after I had completed the chemotherapy,
This and the cancer put me on antidepressants.