Making a decision about cancer treatment can be an overwhelming experience for many people.
Important decisions need to be made about treatment for new or recurrent cancer as well as ending
treatment. Decisions are made throughout your cancer journey related to managing your disease and its
impact on your life. Sometimes it is hard to know what questions to ask the doctor. One proven strategy
for getting the most out of your appointment is to be as prepared as possible. Having a written list of
questions can help you feel more organized and comfortable in asking the questions you need to have
answered as you work together with your doctor to make a decision about which treatment is right for
you.
As you consider the treatment options with your oncologist and your family, you will need to
determine what you can realistically expect from treatment. Talk with your doctor to better understand
your type and stage of cancer. You can also discuss what your doctor feels is the best goal of treatment
for you and share your goals around cancer treatment. A goal of treatment may be cure, slowing or
controlling tumor growth, or extending your life while maintaining quality of life. Some cancer
treatments are designed to control pain and other symptoms when a cure is not possible. There are
many medications that reduce side effects and make it possible for you to continue to work or keep up
with your usual activities.
Tips for Treatment Decision Making
 Ask your doctor if a decision needs to be made immediately or if you have some time to become
more informed and weigh all your options.
 Try and learn as much as possible about your cancer and treatment options before making a
decision. There are excellent booklets and online information available through the Cancer
Support Community, the National Cancer Institute and many other organizations to help you get
more informed.
 Consider getting a second opinion from another doctor or cancer center about your diagnosis and
treatment options. Getting another opinion elsewhere does not mean that you must be treated at