

Interview Questions for a Surgeon

- What is my diagnosis?
- What Stage is my cancer?
- What are my treatment options? What are the benefits of each option? What are the side effects?
- Should I undergo genetic testing?
- Will I need any additional testing?
- What is the testing for?
- What will the results of the additional testing tell you?
- When will you get the results? How will I be informed?
- Why do I need surgery?
- What is the goal of this surgery: to take out the cancer, to remove some of the tumor to test for cancer, or to help with a problem the tumor is causing?
- What are the benefits?
- What are the chances it will work?
- How often is this surgery performed for my type of cancer?
- How many times have you done this procedure?
- What is your success rate?
- What are the possible complications, risks, or side effects?
- Why do I need this treatment?
- Do I have cancer in my lymph nodes?
- What is the significance of cancer found in the lymph nodes?
- Are there any other alternatives to treat the cancer or relieve the problem?
- Will I need other cancer treatments, like chemotherapy or radiation? Before or after surgery?
- What will happen if I don't have the operation?
- What do I have to lose or gain if I don't have this surgery?
- Am I healthy enough to have the surgery?
- Are you certified by the American Board of Surgery and/or a Specialty Surgery Board?
- Exactly what will you be doing during this surgery? What will you be removing and why?
- Will the surgery cure the cancer?
- How long will the surgery take?
- Who will update my family?
- Will I need blood transfusions?
- Do I need to do anything special to prepare for surgery?
- Will I have to stay in the hospital? If so, how long?
- What happens if the surgery doesn't work?
- What can I expect after surgery? Will there be a lot of pain? Will I have any drains or catheters coming out of my body?
- Can I sleep on my back, side, stomach?
- How soon can I shower after surgery?
- Do I have any restrictions and, if so, what are they and for how long?

- How will my body be affected by the surgery? Will it look or work differently? Will any of the changes be permanent?
- Will I be taking medicine after the surgery? How do you spell it? How will I take it?
- Are there any side effects?
- Will this medicine be okay to take with my other medications?
- How soon can I go back to work?
- Do I need to change my daily routine?
- How long before I can go back to my usual activities, like the gym?
- What about sex?
- Do I have time to think about the other options or get a second opinion?
- How quickly must I decide about my treatment?
- Will a delay in treatment reduce my chance of being cured?
- If I choose surveillance (monitoring or watching the cancer), or the cancer comes back, how will I be treated?
- What number should I call in an emergency?
- What is the name of the person I should communicate with in your office? Do they have a direct number?

These last two questions are usually addressed with the person responsible for billing:

- Will my insurance pay for this surgery?
- How much will my portion be?

You should never leave the surgeon's appointment with unanswered questions, unless they are about tests or pathology results that have not yet been completed.