

Your Life, Your Health, Your Responsibility

The following questions are designed to help you and your physicians determine the best course of treatment for your fight against cancer in your brain. However, if a physician is not as familiar with radiosurgery as other methods, that option may not be offered or recommended. You have the right—and responsibility—to ask questions like those that follow, and to talk with a neurosurgeon or physician that is familiar with radiosurgery to see if you can benefit from this gentle, non-invasive treatment for brain cancer. We suggest you print these questions and take them with you.

Questions to Ask Your Oncologist or Referring Physician

- What is my diagnosis and what does it mean?
- What is my prognosis?
- What are my treatment options? Do they include radiosurgery?
- Do you know a specialist who uses Gamma Knife® radiosurgery to treat conditions like mine?
- What hospital or center do they use to perform Gamma Knife radiosurgery?
Note – you may wish to verify in advance that the hospital or center named is on the list of Gamma Knife® treatment centers. You can do this by visiting livingwithbrainmets.org.
- What effect will the treatment for my brain metastases have on the treatment plan for my primary cancer?
Note – this is only applicable if you are still under treatment for your primary cancer. Because Gamma Knife surgery can be performed in a single day, it generally does not affect your primary cancer treatment plan.
- Will the treatment be designed to cure me (curative) or to relieve my pain and extend my life (palliative)?

Questions to Ask Your Neurosurgeon or Radiation Oncologist

- Do you perform Gamma Knife surgery?
Note – if the answer is “no” you may want to consult with a neurosurgeon who is familiar with Gamma Knife surgery. You can directly contact the closest hospital or center on the list of Gamma Knife treatment centers to find a neurosurgeon. You can do this by visiting livingwithbrainmets.org.
- Can I be treated with Gamma Knife surgery?
- Would I be a good candidate for a combination treatment of radiosurgery and open surgery, or whole brain and radiosurgery?
- Are you going to use Leksell Gamma Knife?
Note – if the hospital where the neurosurgeon practices doesn’t have Leksell Gamma Knife, they may try to tell you another treatment is “as good.” Read “The Gold Standard in Radiosurgery” on livingwithbrainmets.org to learn why this isn’t true.
- Will you be using the head frame?
Note – if the physician says he or she is performing Gamma Knife surgery but is not using a head frame then it’s not really Gamma Knife surgery.
- How many times will I have to be treated?
Note – if the physician says he or she is performing Gamma Knife surgery but it is requiring multiple treatments, then it’s not really Gamma Knife surgery.