

Treatment for Breast Cancer

In recent years, there has been an explosion of life-saving treatment advances against breast cancer, bringing hope, excitement, and optimism.

Instead of only one or two options, today there's an multitude of treatment choices that fight the complex mix of cells in each individual cancer. The decisions can feel overwhelming.

In cancer care, doctors and other clinicians specializing in different areas of cancer treatment—such as surgery, radiation oncology, and medical oncology—work together to create a patient's overall treatment plan that combines expertise and an individualized patient care.

The breast cancer care team will specifically tailor the treatment for each patient and their type of breast cancer.

The biology and behavior of breast cancer affects the treatment plan. Some tumors are smaller but grow quickly, while others are larger and grow slowly. Treatment options and recommendations are very personalized.

Breast cancer treatment includes local therapy and systemic therapy:

- **Local Therapy** is focused on the disease in the breast and the nearby lymph nodes. Local therapies are surgery, either lumpectomy or mastectomy, and radiation.
- **Systemic Therapy** focuses on the very small cancer cells that have moved to different parts of the patient's body, away from their breast. Systemic therapies are chemotherapy, hormonal therapy and targeted treatments.

Several factors help determine if a patient needs local therapy, systemic therapy or both, including:

- The tumor's subtype, including hormone receptor status (ER, PR) and HER2 status
- The stage of the tumor
- Genomic profiling to provide information on clinically relevant targeted therapies and clinical trials.
- The patient's age, general health, menopausal status, and personal preferences
- The presence of known mutations in inherited breast cancer genes, such as BRCA1 or BRCA2

The websites linked below provide additional information about each of these treatment types.

Content adapted from websites below.

Resources for Additional Information:

- Breastcancer.org
- [Living Beyond Breast Cancer](http://LivingBeyondBreastCancer.org)
- [National Breast Cancer Foundation, Inc.](http://NationalBreastCancerFoundation.org)
- [Cancer.Net, Breast Cancer](http://Cancer.Net/BreastCancer)
- [NCCN Guidelines for Patients](http://NCCNGuidelinesforPatients.org)
- [NCI Breast Cancer](http://NCIBreastCancer.org)
- [American Cancer Society – Breast Cancer](http://AmericanCancerSociety.org/BreastCancer)
- [Susan G. Komen](http://SusanG.Komen.org)

800-227-2345

Recursos en Español:

- [NIH, Cáncer de seno \(mama\) – Versión para pacientes](http://NIH.CancerdeSeno(mama).org)