

When Breast Cancer is Diagnosed

To make a definite diagnosis of breast cancer, cells or tissue must be removed by surgery or with a needle from the abnormal area of the breast. They are then examined under the microscope. The procedure that removes cells or tissue is called a biopsy. If a biopsy confirms cancer, a number of tests may be done to find out if the breast cancer has spread to other organs.

Answers to these questions will help you understand your diagnosis.

Q: What were the results of my biopsy or needle aspiration?

A:

Q: What kind of breast cancer do I have? What is the stage of my disease? What is the size of the tumor? Has the cancer spread to my lymph nodes or other parts of my body (metastasized)?

A:

Q: What tests were done on the tumor and what were the results (i.e., estrogen and progesterone receptor status)? How do these results affect my options for treating the cancer?

A:

Q: Who will coordinate my care?

A:

Q: How can I get a copy of my pathology report?

A:

Q: Will the lymph nodes under my arm be checked for cancer?
If so, how will this affect my treatment options?

A:

Q: What tests will I have before surgery to see if the cancer has spread to any other organs (liver, lungs, bones)?

A:

Q: What do you recommend for treatment? Will you refer me to an oncologist (a doctor who specializes in treating people with cancer)?

A:

Q: What is my prognosis (chance for recovery)?

A:



For more information on breast health or breast cancer, please call our breast care helpline (1-877-465-6636) or visit our website. Susan G. Komen for the Cure does not provide medical advice.

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