

Early-Stage Breast Cancer Treatment Options

This decision aid is for people with early-stage breast cancer who are considering lumpectomy with radiation or mastectomy. It is not for people with inflammatory or late-stage breast cancer. Another decision aid is available for breast reconstruction after mastectomy.

PATIENT QUESTIONS	Lumpectomy with Radiation	Mastectomy
<p>What does it involve?</p>	<p>You will have surgery to remove the cancer and some tissue around it. You may need another surgery if signs of cancer are on the edges of the removed tissue. You may go home the same day. After you heal, you will get radiation 5 days a week for 3 to 6 weeks.</p>	<p>You will have surgery to remove the whole breast. You may go home the same day or stay in the hospital for a day or more. Tubes will be left under the skin for up to 2 weeks to help you heal.</p>
<p>What about these treatment options is the same?</p>	<p>No matter which treatment you choose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You may need other treatments like radiation, hormone therapy, or chemotherapy. Some lymph nodes in your armpit may be removed for testing. 	
<p>How long will I live?</p>	<p>About 65 to 83 of 100 people (65% to 83%) live 10 years or more.</p>	<p>About 66 to 80 of 100 people (66% to 80%) live 10 years or more.</p>
<p>Will cancer come back anywhere?</p>	<p>About 29 to 36 of 100 people (29% to 36%) have cancer come back within 20 years.</p>	<p>About 30 of 100 people (30%) have cancer come back within 20 years.</p>

PATIENT QUESTIONS	Lumpectomy with Radiation	Mastectomy
<p>What are the side effects and harms?</p>	<p><i>After surgery</i>, pain, numbness, and swelling are common.</p> <p>Out of 100 people, shortly after surgery, about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 (2%) get an infection. <p><i>After radiation</i>, you may feel tired, have peeling skin, or skin changes that usually go away with time. You may have trouble breastfeeding with the treated breast.</p> <p>Surgery or radiation in the armpit may cause swelling, pain or numbness in the armpit or arm.</p> <p>Serious harms are rare.</p>	<p><i>After surgery</i>, pain, numbness, and swelling are common.</p> <p>Out of 100 people, shortly after surgery, about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 (5%) get an infection. • 4 (4%) have serious skin breakdown. <p>Surgery or radiation in the armpit may cause swelling, pain or numbness in the armpit or arm.</p> <p>Serious harms are rare.</p>
<p>When can I return to my usual activities?</p>	<p>Many people return to usual activities 2 days to 2 weeks after surgery.</p>	<p>Many people return to usual activities within 3 to 6 weeks after surgery.</p>
<p>What else should I know?</p>	<p>You may see a scar and the skin may feel numb.</p> <p>Your breast may be smaller.</p> <p>Radiation treatment takes time.</p>	<p>Your chest will have a scar, look flat and feel numb.</p> <p>You can wear a breast shape (prosthesis) under your clothes.</p> <p>Some may choose to have breast reconstruction.</p>

DEFINITIONS

Chemotherapy: It is medicine that destroys, stops, or slows cancer cells.

Early-Stage Breast Cancer: This means cancer cells are only in the breast and possibly in the armpit.

Breast prosthesis: It is a breast shape you wear under your clothes. It will look as if you have a natural breast.

Breast reconstruction: It is surgery to create what looks like a breast. Your healthcare professional uses an implant, or fat and skin, and sometimes muscle from your body.

Hormone therapy: It is medicine that changes hormones. It can stop or slow the cancer.

Inflammatory breast cancer: Inflammatory breast cancer is a fast-growing type of breast cancer. It can cause changes to the breast that you can see, including redness, pitting, and swelling. It is not common.

Lymph nodes: Lymph nodes are part of your immune system. Lymph nodes in your armpit are tested to check for cancer spread.

Radiation: Radiation therapy uses high-energy x-rays to destroy cancer cells or stop or slow them.

Updated Sept 2022 • *If you have concerns that this information might be out of date, contact your healthcare provider.*

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Your Notes and Questions