

# Breast Cancer: A Guide for Newly Diagnosed Women

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Breast cancer occurs mostly in women. In North America, it is the most common type of cancer in women and one of the most treatable. The chance of a woman having breast cancer in her lifetime is about 1 in 8; however the chance of dying from breast cancer is only 1 in 33.

## What is Breast Cancer?

Breast cancer is when cells of the breast ducts or glands become very abnormal – more than atypical. In-situ cells are early cancer cells that are confined to the breast glands and ducts. These cells threaten the breast but not usually the individual's life.

Invasive or infiltrating cancer is cancer that has broken through the walls of the breast glands or ducts.

## Types of Breast Cancer

**Ductal Carcinoma In-Situ (DCIS)** is the most common type of non-invasive breast cancer.

**Lobular Carcinoma In-Situ (LCIS)** is cancer that begins in the milk-making glands but does not break through the wall of the lobules.

**Infiltrating or Invasive Ductal Carcinoma (IDC)** is cancer that has broken through the wall of the duct and invades the tissue of the breast.

**Infiltrating or Invasive Lobular Carcinoma (ILC)** is cancer that starts in the milk glands or lobules but may have spread to other areas of the body.

## The Diagnosis

- You may feel anxious, afraid, depressed or angry
- Symptoms of depression can appear
- This is a good time to start taking notes during visits

## Meeting the Breast Surgeon

- Bring a support person
- Pathology will be reviewed
- Treatment will depend on size, location and spread of the cancer

## Surgical Options

- Options may include reconstruction, lumpectomy, partial or total mastectomy
- Lymph nodes may or may not be removed
- Sometimes removal of the fat pad in the armpit is necessary
- Candidates for a mastectomy may want to discuss breast reconstruction

The medical oncologist specializes in cancer treatment.

The radiation oncologist specializes in the use of radiation (rays of energy) to destroy cancer cells.

## The Bottom Line

- Breast cancer is often a treatable and curable disease
- Understanding your cancer is essential to getting the best possible treatment
- Our health-care team is here to determine the best treatment
- Feel free to talk with any of your providers about your cancer