

Breast Cancer

Breast cancer is the most common type of cancer among women in Singapore. 1 out of every 17 women in Singapore is diagnosed with breast cancer.

What is Breast Cancer?

Breast cancer is a disease in which malignant (cancer) cells are detected in breast tissues. These cancer cells can then spread within the breast, and eventually to other parts of the body.

Normal cells divide and reproduce in an orderly manner, and your body relies on this process to repair injuries and replace worn-out tissue. Sometimes, this process is disrupted. These cells will then grow and divide out of control. It will produce extra tissue to form a mass or lump called a tumour. It can either be benign or malignant.

Benign tumours are not cancerous. They may grow slowly but do not spread to other organs. On the other hand, malignant tumours are cancerous growths may spread to other organs.

Treating breast cancer

There are many options to treat and manage breast cancer.

Make an appointment with us [\[HYPERLINK\]](#) if you wish a second opinion on treating and managing your breast cancer.

Before developing a treatment plan, your breast cancer specialist will consider the following factors first:

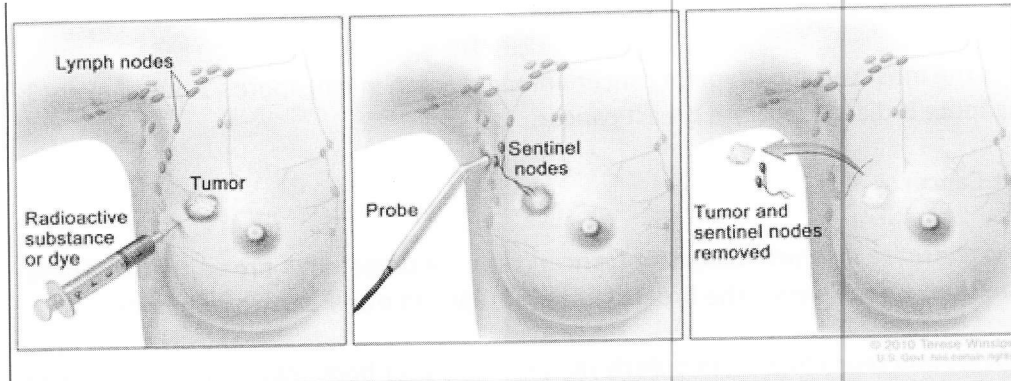
- The stage and grade of your tumour
- Your tumour's hormone receptor status (ER, PR) and HER2/neu status
- Your age and general health
- Your menopausal status
- The presence of known mutations to breast cancer genes
- Your tumour's size and rate of growth

He or she will then come up with a treatment plan based on the extent of your cancer:

Surgery

Most patients will require surgery to remove the cancer. The types of surgery include:

- **Breast – conserving surgery**
Also known as a lumpectomy, this surgery involves the only removal of the cancer and a small amount of surrounding tissue.
- **Simple Mastectomy**
This procedure removes all breast tissue from your body.
- **Modified radical mastectomy**
This procedure removes the breast and underarm lymph nodes from your body.
- **Sentinal node biopsy**



To determine whether cancer has spread to your lymph nodes, your surgeon will discuss with you the role of removing the lymph nodes that are the first to receive the lymph drainage from your tumor.

If no cancer is found in those lymph nodes, the chance of finding cancer in any of the remaining lymph nodes is small and no other nodes need to be removed.

Adjuvant Therapies

Adjuvant therapies are treatments that are given after your surgery to decrease the risk of the breast cancer returning. These include:

- **Chemotherapy**

Chemotherapy involves using drugs to kill cancer cells. The drugs may be given by mouth, or injected into the veins intravenously in an outpatient setting. It may either be done before your surgery to shrink a tumour, or done after your surgery to reduce the risk of the cancer returning.

Most people will experience side effects after the chemotherapy. The side effects depend on the individual and the drug dosage. You may experience the following:

- Fatigue
- Risk of infection
- Nausea
- Vomiting

- **Radiation therapy**

Radiation therapy is the use of x-ray to kill the cancer cells. This treatment is given daily for five to six weeks in an outpatient setting.

- **Hormone therapy**

Hormone therapy is useful to manage a tumour that tests positive for either estrogen or progesterone receptors. This type of tumour uses hormones to fuel its growth. Blocking the hormones usually limits the growth of the tumour.

- **Targeted therapy**

Targeted therapy is a treatment that targets faulty genes or proteins that contribute to cancer growth and development. You will be given drugs that stop action of these abnormal proteins.

Talk to us to understand which treatment options are the most suitable for you. [HYPERLINK]

Post Treatment Care for Breast Cancer

After treatment for breast cancer ends, talk to your doctor about developing a follow-up care plan. This plan may include regular physical examinations and/or medical tests to monitor your recovery for the coming years.

