

About Breast Cancer: Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women in the United States and in Louisiana. Breast cancer is a malignancy that starts from cells of the breast which may invade surrounding tissues or spread to other areas of the body. The emotional and physical results following a diagnosis of breast cancer are very different from what they were in the past. Thanks to early detection, improvements in treatment and reconstructive options, millions of women are surviving breast cancer today and leading healthy and fulfilling lives.



Breast Cancer Statistics: The chance of a woman having invasive breast cancer some time during her life is a little less than 1 in 8. The chance of dying from breast cancer is about 1 in 35. Breast cancer death rates have been going down. There are more than 2.5 million breast cancer survivors in the United States and you are one of them.

Breast Cancer Treatments: Breast cancer treatments are varied and include surgery, chemotherapy, radiation therapy and hormone therapy. You will work with your doctor or a team of doctors to decide which treatment is right for you. Ask questions, keep copies of your medical records and lab reports, and do not be afraid to ask for a second opinion.

Breast Cancer Surgery: Most women with breast cancer have some type of surgery to remove one or more breast tumors. Options include breast-conserving surgery (lumpectomy) and mastectomy (removal of the breast). Surgery is also used to check or remove lymph nodes under the arm that may have been invaded by breast cancer cells.

Clinical Trials: Clinical trials are carefully controlled research studies that are done with patients who volunteer for them so doctors can learn better ways to treat cancer. There are requirements you must meet to take part in any clinical trial. The clinical trial must be explained to you fully and you must agree with the conditions. Discuss your eligibility for clinical trials with your doctor.

Other Breast Cancer Treatment Alternatives: For more details on the latest treatment options, including some that may not be addressed in this document and services available to you, please contact the following organizations:

American Cancer Society

1-800-ACS-2345

www.cancer.org/Cancer/BreastCancer

National Cancer Institute

1-800-4-CANCER

www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/types/breast

www.cancer.org/clinicaltrials

CAGNO Breastoration Fund

1-800-624-2039

www.cagno.org or www.breastoration.org

**Louisiana Association of United Ways
Health & Human Services Hotline**

2-1-1

Louisiana Breast Cancer Task Force

504-454-0066

Susan G. Komen for the Cure

1-877-465-6636

www.komen.org

This brochure was developed by the Cancer and Lung Trust Fund Board and the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals and is distributed by the Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners. Physicians are required to inform patients with breast cancer of their treatment options; to provide the patient with a copy of this brochure and to document the date and time when this is done in the patient's medical record.(LRS 40:1300.154 A). Copies of the brochure may be obtained by contacting the Board at lsbme@lsbme.la.gov.

Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners

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Breast Cancer Treatment Alternatives

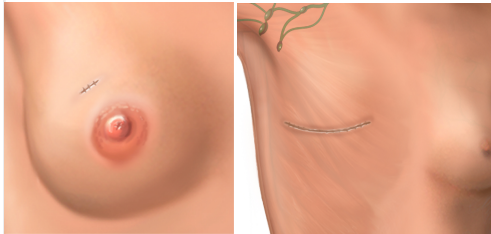


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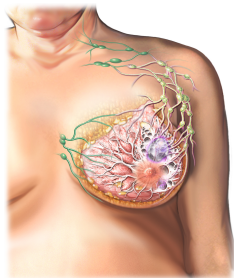
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Lumpectomy or Mastectomy?: Many women with early-stage cancers can choose between lumpectomy and mastectomy. The main advantage of a lumpectomy is that it allows a woman to keep most of her breast; however, you may need to have radiation therapy after surgery. A small number of women having a lumpectomy may not need radiation while a small percentage of women who have a mastectomy will still need radiation therapy to the breast area. Should you decide to have a mastectomy, ask your surgeon about reconstructive options, which may be performed simultaneously for better cosmetic results.



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Axillary Lymph Node Dissection: To determine if the breast cancer has spread to axillary (underarm) lymph nodes, some nodes may be removed and looked at under a microscope. This is an important part of cancer staging to determine treatment and outcomes. When the lymph nodes contain cancer cells, there is a higher chance that cancer cells have also spread through the bloodstream to other parts of the body. Pain, arm swelling and limited range of motion are potential side effects of lymph node dissections.

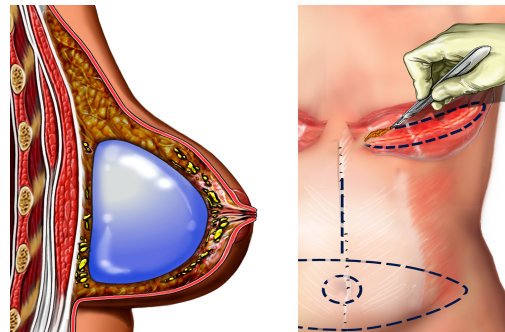


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Women's Health & Cancer Rights Act of 1998: Under the Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act of 1998 (WHCRA), group health plans, insurance companies and HMOs offering mastectomy coverage must also provide coverage for certain services relating to the mastectomy in a manner determined in consultation with you and your attending physician. The coverage includes all stages of reconstruction of the breast on which the mastectomy was performed, surgery and reconstruction of the other breast to produce a symmetrical appearance and prostheses and treatment of physical complications of the mastectomy, including lymphedema. Louisiana has its own statute which conforms to federal law.



Breast Reconstruction: The goal of reconstruction is to restore a breast mound removed during a mastectomy using an implant or tissue from another part of your body. It is best to talk about reconstructive options with your surgeon and a plastic surgeon experienced in breast reconstruction before your mastectomy. This lets the surgical team plan the treatment that is best for you, even if you want to wait and have reconstructive surgery later. Each procedure has advantages and disadvantages that must be weighed by you and your physicians; however, the final decision should be yours based on your preference and understanding of the options.



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Radiation Therapy: Radiation therapy uses high-energy x-rays or other types of radiation to kill cancer cells or keep them from growing. External radiation therapy uses a machine outside the body to send radiation toward the cancer. Internal radiation therapy (brachytherapy) uses a radioactive substance that is placed directly into or near the cancer. Side effects include skin irritation, fatigue and swelling. External radiation treatments are given daily for 5-7 weeks. Internal radiation therapy may require hospitalization for several days.

Chemotherapy: Chemotherapy (often called "chemo") is treatment with cancer-killing drugs that are either injected into a vein or given by mouth. The drugs travel through the bloodstream to reach cancer cells in most parts of the body. Chemo is given in cycles, with each period of treatment followed by a recovery period. Treatment usually lasts for several months. The side effects of chemotherapy depend on the type of drugs, the amount taken and the length of treatment. Some of the most common possible side effects include: hair loss, mouth sores, loss of appetite, nausea and vomiting, increased risk of infections, easy bruising or bleeding and fatigue. These side effects are usually short-term and go away after treatment is finished. Let your healthcare team know if you experience any side effects.

Hormone Therapy: Hormone therapy uses drug treatments that target breast cancers which are sensitive to certain body chemicals. The most common forms of hormone therapy for breast cancer work either by blocking estrogen from attaching to cancer cells or by decreasing your body's production of estrogen. While undergoing hormone therapies for breast cancer, you may experience hot flashes, vaginal discharge, dryness and irritation, irregular periods, decreased sex drive, mood changes or an increased risk of bone thinning (osteoporosis).