

Men and Breast Cancer Treatment

1 Initial Surgery

Most men diagnosed with breast cancer will receive a modified radical mastectomy (removal of the breast, some of the lymph nodes under the arm, the lining over the chest muscles, and sometimes part of the chest wall muscles).

2 Adjuvant Therapy

Therapy given after an operation when cancer cells can no longer be seen is called adjuvant therapy. Even if the doctor removes all the cancer that can be seen at the time of the operation, the patient may be given radiation therapy, chemotherapy, and/or hormone therapy after surgery to try to kill any cancer cells that may be left.

Node-negative: For men whose cancer is node-negative (cancer has not spread to the lymph nodes), adjuvant therapy should be considered on the same basis as for a woman with breast cancer because there is no evidence that response to therapy is different for men and women.

Node-positive: For men whose cancer is node-positive (cancer has spread to the lymph nodes), adjuvant therapy may include the following:

1. Chemotherapy plus tamoxifen (to block the effect of estrogen).
2. Other hormone therapy.

These treatments appear to increase survival in men as they do in women. The patient's response to hormone therapy depends on the presence of hormone receptors (proteins) in the tumor. Most breast cancers in men have these receptors. Hormone therapy is usually recommended for male breast cancer patients, but it can have many side effects, including hot flashes and impotence (the inability to have an erection adequate for sexual intercourse).

3 Distant Metastases

For men with distant metastases (cancer that has spread to other parts of the body), hormone therapy, chemotherapy, or a combination of both has shown some success. Hormone therapy may include the following:

Orchiectomy (the removal of the testicles to decrease hormone production).

Luteinizing hormone-releasing hormone agonist with or without total androgen blockade (to decrease the production of sex hormones).

Tamoxifen for cancer that is estrogen-receptor positive.

Progesterone (a female hormone).

Aminoglutethimide (to lessen the amount of estrogen produced).

Hormone therapies may be used in sequence (one after the other). Standard chemotherapy regimens may be used if hormone therapy does not work. Men usually respond to therapy in the same way as women who have breast cancer.

4 Treatment Options for Locally Recurrent Disease

For men with locally recurrent disease (cancer that has come back in a limited area after treatment), treatment is usually either:

Surgery combined with chemotherapy; or

Radiation therapy combined with chemotherapy.

Courtesy of www.malecare.com