

8 THINGS

To Know About Making Treatment Decisions

While metastatic breast cancer remains incurable, current treatments aim to slow down the progression of the disease and potentially help maintain quality of life. Your treatment options will depend on several factors and can change over time, so it's important that you talk with your medical team when making decisions about your care. Below are some tips to help when deciding what's best for you.

1 Ask what type of metastatic breast cancer you have

There are several types of metastatic breast cancer (MBC) and it's important to know what kind you have. Metastatic breast cancer can be classified by hormone receptor (HR) status and levels of human epidermal growth factor receptor 2 (HER2) expression. The type you have will help determine your treatment options. HER2 expression may help shape the view of breast cancer, and it is recommended that all patients with invasive breast cancer be tested for HER2 levels of expression to help guide treatment decisions. Your tumor status can change over time, so retesting your tumor might be considered. Please discuss with your doctor.

2 Ask what test(s) can help you learn more about your MBC

Like other cancers, there are several ways that your disease can be evaluated to inform your treatment options and decisions. Some of these include:

- Tumor biopsy
- Blood test
- Bone scan
- Advanced genomic testing
- Chest X-ray
- Genetic tests (including BRCA1/2, ESRm, TP53, or PTEN tests)

3 Work with your medical team to determine which treatment plan is right for you

Your doctor will often consider your personal treatment goals and preferences before recommending a treatment plan. These include how many times a day you take the medicine, number of weeks you'll be on treatment, how you respond to treatment and if you have any side effects. Be sure to have an honest and open discussion with your team so you receive the best care.

4 Know all of your options

The type of MBC you have will help determine your treatment plan. Treatment decisions and recommendations are personalized so it is important to know all of your options. Some therapies include:

- **Hormonal Therapy:** Standard treatment for many people with HR-positive breast cancer. Treatment blocks the effect of estrogen or progesterone on breast cancer cells and lowers the amount of estrogen or progesterone in the body
- **Chemotherapy:** Drugs that kill rapidly growing cells including cancer cells and some healthy cells
- **Targeted Therapy:** Drugs that target specific tumor types and genetic mutations
- **Immunotherapy:** Drugs that strengthen or change how the immune system works to better enable it to fight cancer
- **Combination Therapy:** Using two or more methods to treat the cancer
- **Other therapies:** Enhances the effects of other treatments or minimizes side effects such as treatments for bone metastases, surgery or radiation therapy

5 Ask about the pros and cons of treatment options

Whether you've just been diagnosed with MBC or have been living with the disease for some time, it helps to know what to expect from your treatment, such as efficacy, side effects and out-of-pocket cost. Take notes during your appointments, and if you're not comfortable with the discussion or the options presented to you, don't hesitate to ask for further explanation or seek a second opinion.

6 What about combination treatment?

Some people with MBC may require combination therapy, which involves taking two or more medications at the same time. Therapies approved for combination are given individually and not combined into a single administration. This approach is not recommended for everyone, so be sure to talk with your medical team about which approach may be right for you. Many therapies used in combination therapy may be used alone as monotherapy as well.

7 What happens if the treatment stops working?

Responses to cancer treatment will vary for each individual. If your treatment stops working and the cancer continues to grow or returns, your medical team may recommend another type of treatment. However, before that happens, your medical team may order additional testing to determine if your cancer has changed or progressed.

8 Take an active role in your treatment

Consistently communicating with your medical team is key to learning more about your disease and ensuring you receive the best possible care. Before each doctor visit, bring questions and notes on how you're feeling on your current treatment. Also, remember to try to achieve your best health through good nutrition, staying active and limiting stress.

MBC Treatment Classes and Administration Types

Class	Monotherapy	Combination Therapy
Anthracyclines	X	X
Antimetabolites	X	X
CDK4/6 inhibitors	X	X
Microtubule Inhibitors	X	X
Nonsteroidal aromatase inhibitors	X	X
Estrogen receptor antagonist	X	X
Steroidal aromatase inhibitors	X	X
Taxanes	X	X
HER2- targeted therapies	X	X
HER2+ targeted therapies	X	X
<i>mTOR</i> inhibitors	X	X
<i>PI3K</i> inhibitors	X	X
Antibody-Drug Conjugates	X	X
Immunotherapy	X	X
PARP inhibitors	X	X