

## **Male Breast Cancer and Common Treatments** (Sources: ACS, NCI, Mayo Clinic, Komen)

Breast cancer occurs primarily in women, but men can also develop breast cancer. Although men have less breast tissue than women, they do have breast cells that can undergo cancerous changes. Male breast cancer makes up less than 1 percent of all cases of breast cancer, and is usually detected in men between 60 and 70 years of age.

### **Symptoms**

It is important to see a doctor if any of the following changes to the breasts is noticed:

- A lump or swelling in the chest area
- Dimpled or puckered skin
- A nipple that is inverted (facing inward)
- Redness or scaling of the nipple or breast skin
- Discharge from the nipple

Most breast lumps in men are due to gynecomastia and not cancer. Gynecomastia, the most common male breast disorder, is an increase in the amount of a man's breast tissue. However, it is still important to see a medical professional about any of the symptoms, including a lump, to rule out male breast cancer.

### **Diagnosis**

The following types of breast cancer are found in men:

- Infiltrating ductal carcinoma: Cancer that has spread beyond the cells lining ducts in the breast. As with women, most men with breast cancer have this type of cancer.
- Ductal carcinoma in situ: Abnormal cells that are found in the lining of a duct; also called intraductal carcinoma.
- Inflammatory breast cancer: A type of cancer in which the breast looks red and swollen and feels warm.
- Paget's disease of the nipple: A tumor that has grown from ducts beneath the nipple onto the surface of the nipple.

Lobular carcinoma in situ (abnormal cells found in one of the lobes or sections of the breast), which sometimes occurs in women, has not been seen in men.

The stages of male breast cancer, and the prognosis at each stage, are the same as for female breast cancer. (See Stages of Breast Cancer). The spread of cancer from the breast to lymph nodes and other parts of the body also appears to be similar in men and women.

Important differences between male and female breast cancer can result in male breast cancer being diagnosed at a later stage, which affects prognosis and treatment. One difference is breast size. Men have little breast tissue, which does make it easier to feel small masses. For the same reason, though, cancers do not grow far before reaching the skin covering the breast or the muscles underneath. The result is that while male breast cancers tend to be smaller than female breast cancers when they are found, they have more often spread beyond the breast.

Another key difference is that breast cancer is rare among men. Most women are aware of breast cancer and have a female friend or family member affected by breast cancer. Men often do not even know it is possible for them to get breast cancer, and therefore may ignore the symptoms.

### **Treatment**

Since the types of breast cancer, staging, and patterns of how the disease spreads are similar in both men and women, treatments are also similar.

A mastectomy, a surgical procedure to remove the breast with the cancerous tumor, is generally the treatment of choice for male breast cancer. Chemotherapy, radiation and hormone therapies are also used following surgery.

Information provided by [National Breast Cancer Awareness Month](#) website.