

Breast Cancer

Cancer cells are abnormal cells. Cancer cells grow and divide more quickly than healthy cells. Some cancer cells may form growths called tumors. All tumors increase in size, but some tumors grow quickly, others slowly. Cancer cells can spread to other parts of the body through the blood and lymph systems. This is called **metastasis**.

Breast cancer is when cancer starts in the breast. Breast cancer can be found by mammogram, by a woman feeling a lump or by a doctor's exam. To find breast cancer, it is important to:

- Do monthly self breast exams.
- Have a yearly exam by your doctor if you are over 40. These are done less often for younger women.
- Have a mammogram each year after age 40.

Breast Tissue

A woman's breasts may feel more firm and lumpy before menopause. A woman has less estrogen after menopause, so the breasts feel much softer and less lumpy.

The firm, lumpy tissue can hide a small lump making it hard to feel. By checking your breasts each month, you become familiar with your breast tissue and notice changes. Small lumps can also be found by a mammogram or by a doctor during your exam. Some lumps are so small that only a mammogram can find them.

乳癌

癌細胞是異常的細胞。癌細胞的生長和分裂比健康細胞快。有些癌細胞可能生長形成腫瘤。所有的腫瘤都會不斷變大，但是生長速度有快有慢。癌細胞可能透過血液和淋巴系統擴散至身體的其他部位。這稱為**轉移 (metastasis)**。

乳癌就是始發於乳房的癌。透過乳房攝影檢查、女性的乳房自檢或醫生的檢查，均可發現乳癌。要及時發現乳癌，必須遵守以下要求：

- 每月進行乳房自檢。
- 年滿 40 歲後，每年請醫生檢查一次乳房。未到此年齡的女性，可減少檢查次數。
- 年滿 40 歲後，每年作一次乳房攝影檢查。

乳房組織

女性在停經之前，乳房可能更堅挺而多硬塊。女性停經後，體內雌激素減少，乳房會變軟很多，而且不象停經前有那麼多硬塊。

堅挺而多硬塊的乳房組織可能使小腫塊難以用手摸到。每月檢查一次乳房，可以熟悉乳房組織，注意到乳房的變化。此外，透過乳房攝影檢查或醫生的檢查，也可發現小的腫塊。有些腫塊非常小，必須透過乳房攝影檢查才能發現。

Tests

If a lump is found, a mammogram or ultrasound will be done. A biopsy is often done to check if the lump is cancer and if so, what type. A biopsy is a procedure to remove tiny pieces of tissue. The samples are then checked by a doctor. If the biopsy finds cancer, more tests may be done to see if the cancer has spread to other parts of your body.

Types of Treatment

Based on your biopsy results and the type of cancer, you and your doctor will decide the best treatment for your breast cancer. Here are the treatments that may be done:

Surgery

Surgery is done to remove as much of the cancer as possible. Either the whole breast is removed, called **mastectomy**, or a part of the breast is removed, called **lumpectomy**. With either surgery, lymph nodes under the arm are checked for cancer. You and your doctor may also talk about **reconstruction surgery**. This surgery is done to create the look of a normal breast.

You may still need to have more treatment. Having a mastectomy or lumpectomy does not guarantee that the breast cancer is gone from the entire body. Small cancer cells that are too small to detect may remain in the body.

測試

如果發現腫塊，須作乳房攝影或超音波檢查。醫生經常會作切片檢查，以判斷腫塊是否為癌症以及屬於什麼類型的癌症。切片檢查是指切下一小片組織作為檢查的樣本，由醫生進行檢查。如果切片檢查確定是癌症，則要透過進一步的測試確定癌症是否已擴散至身體的其他部位。

治療的種類

依據切片檢查的結果和癌的種類，由患者和醫生共同確定乳癌的最佳治療方案。下面介紹一些常見的治療方法。

手術

透過手術，醫生會儘量切除最多的癌組織。切除整隻乳房的手術稱為**全乳房切除術 (mastectomy)**，切除部分乳房的手術稱為**腫瘤切除術 (lumpectomy)**。無論是哪種手術，都要檢查腋下的淋巴結是否有癌症。患者和醫生也可商量是否進行**乳房重建手術 (reconstruction surgery)**。乳房重建手術的目的是恢復正常的乳房外觀。

此外，可能還需要接受其他治療。全乳房切除術或腫瘤切除術不能保證根治乳癌。有些癌細胞非常小，難以發現，可能會留在體內。

Radiation Therapy

When a lumpectomy is done, it is often followed by **radiation therapy**. Radiation therapy is done to treat the entire breast. Radiation therapy often begins 4 to 6 weeks after surgery.

Hormone Therapy and Chemotherapy

Treatment may be needed to target cancer cells that may be remaining in the body. It may be done before surgery to shrink a tumor or after surgery to kill cancer cells that may have spread or that remain in the body.

- **Hormone therapy** is medicine in pill form taken to work against estrogen in the body. The most common side effect is signs of menopause.
- **Chemotherapy** is medicine given in an IV (intravenous) tube in a vein or as a pill. The medicine kills cancer cells. Common side effects include feeling tired, hair loss and nausea. These side effects are often temporary.

Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns.

放射治療

腫瘤切除術後，往往要作**放射治療**。放射治療的目的是治療整個乳房。放射治療往往在手術 4 至 6 週後開始。

荷爾蒙治療和化學治療

荷爾蒙治療和化學治療的目的是專門殺滅殘留在體內的癌細胞。可用於在手術前縮小腫瘤，也可用於在手術後殺滅可能已擴散或殘留在體內的癌細胞。

- **荷爾蒙治療**採取口服藥物的方式，以減少體內雌激素的生成。最常見的副作用是出現停經症狀。
- **化學治療**採取靜脈注射藥物或口服藥物的方式。藥物可殺滅癌細胞。常見的副作用包括疲勞、掉頭髮和噁心。這些副作用往往是暫時性的。

如果有任何疑問或擔心，請諮詢醫生或護士。