

Breast Cancer Diagnosis: What's Next?

It's important to remember that breast cancer is very treatable. The goal of treatment is a cure, as well as quality of life. When you partner with the Huntington Cancer Center to fight cancer, we are with you every step of the way. Here is a brief overview of the next steps after you receive a diagnosis.

Nurse Navigator

Within 24 hours of receiving a diagnosis, your Nurse Navigator will contact you. Our specialists will evaluate your individual situation to help you make an informed decision about the best treatment plan for you.

Your First Consultation

Your Registered Nurse Navigator will help you arrange to bring with you copies of your imaging (mammogram, ultrasound, MRI, usually on a CD with the reports) and a copy of your pathology report.

- You may want to download our Understanding Your Pathology Report resource ahead of this meeting. This PDF resource is available on our Breast Cancer Information & FAQs page as well.
- Please bring the bottles of all of your medications you take, both by doctor's prescription and over the counter. This includes vitamins and herbal products. The bottle should indicate the name of the medication, the dose you take, and how often you take it.
- Be sure to bring your insurance card, a photo ID and, if you have more than one insurance provider, please bring both cards.
- Prepare for your consultation ahead of time: Write down any questions you may have, bring a pen and notebook with you to take notes. Arrange for a friend or family member to come with you; you will be given a lot of information and it's helpful to have someone else listen, take notes and provide support.

Processing Your Initial Diagnosis

When initially diagnosed with breast cancer, it is not uncommon to experience feelings of shock, anger, disbelief, grief and uncertainty. Most women state that upon hearing their diagnosis they heard or remembered little what was said after that point. Their fears took control as they recalled all that they knew or heard about breast cancer in the past.

Some important things to remember as you are first learning of your diagnosis:

- Realize that breast cancer is usually a very treatable disease. Survival rates are at an all-time high.
- Don't rush - you have time to sort through your feelings, fears and emotions. We will help you seek answers to your questions without endangering your health.
- When meeting with your physician bring a support person with you such as your partner or spouse, a family member or a trusted friend. This individual will be your second set of eyes and ears. In addition to providing both physical and emotional support, this person can take notes and/or ask questions you may forget to ask. This will provide you the opportunity to focus on what your physician is saying. A relationship built on trust, respect, and good communication between you and your doctor is important in helping you make critical life-saving decisions.
- The doctors, nurses and care providers at the Huntington Hospital Breast Cancer Center are here for you. We share your challenges and successes as we guide you through your personal journey.