

When Breast Cancer is Diagnosed

To make a definite diagnosis of breast cancer, cells or tissue must be removed by surgery or with a needle from the abnormal area of the breast. They are then examined under the microscope. The procedure that removes cells is called a biopsy. If a biopsy confirms cancer, a number of tests may be performed to determine if the breast cancer has spread to other organs.

Ask your doctor these questions in order to help you better understand your diagnosis.

- ? What did my biopsy or needle aspiration show?
- ? What kind of breast cancer do I have? What is the stage of my disease? What is the size of the tumor? Has the cancer spread to my lymph nodes or other parts of my body (metastasized)?
- ? What tests were done on the tumor and what were the results? (i.e., estrogen and progesterone receptor and 2nu status.) What effect will the results of these tests have on my treatment options?
- ? Who will coordinate my care?
- ? Will the lymph nodes under my arm be checked for cancer? If so, how will this affect my treatment options?
- ? What tests will I have before surgery to see if the cancer has spread to any other organs?
- ? Will you refer me to a medical oncologist?
- ? How can I get a copy of my pathology report?