

Questions to Ask Your Doctor about Metastatic Breast Cancer



Questions about My Cancer

- Where in my body has the breast cancer spread?
- What is my prognosis with treatment? What is my prognosis without treatment?
- Will you do a biopsy or other tests to learn more about the tumor(s) in the new location(s)?
- What are the hormone receptor status and HER2 status of my cancer? Are these different from my first breast cancer? How do these affect my treatment options?
- Should my tumor be tested for a *PIK3CA* gene mutation (with a blood test or test of the tumor tissue)?
- Should my tumor be tested for an *ESR1* gene mutation (with a blood test or test of the tumor tissue)?
- Should my tumor be tested for PD-L1 status?
- Should I get genetic testing for *BRCA1* and *BRCA2* inherited gene mutations to see if a PARP inhibitor may be used in my treatment plan?



Questions about Treatment

- What are my treatment options? What are the pros and cons of each option? Which do you recommend for me and why?
- How will treatment affect my quality of life?
- Are there clinical trials I can join? If so, how do I learn more?
- How long do I have to make a treatment decision?
- Should I get a second opinion? How do I do that?
- How will I know if treatment is working? What tests will I need and how often will I need them?



Questions about Side Effects and Supportive Care

- What side effects should I expect? How long will they last? Which should I report to you right away?
- Will I have any pain? If so, how can I manage it? Will you refer me to a palliative care specialist or pain specialist?
- Are there any limits on my activity?
- Where can I find a counselor for one-on-one support or a support group? What support is available for my family?



Questions about Stopping Treatment for the Cancer

- How will I know if it's time to stop treatment for the cancer?
- Who will be in charge of my medical care after treatment for the cancer ends?
- What kind of care will I get if I stop treatment for the cancer?
- When will hospice care be considered?

Adapted from Susan G. Komen. Treatments for metastatic breast cancer: questions you may want to ask your health care provider. Susan G. Komen website. <https://www.komen.org/breast-cancer/metastatic/metastatic/#questions-for-your-provider>. Updated June 25, 2023. Accessed August 2023.