

Treating Breast Cancer with Hormones

Breast Cancer can be treated in different ways. One form of treatment is hormone therapy.

What do hormones do?

Your ovaries make hormones. Estrogen is one of the hormones made by your ovaries. Some kinds of breast cancer use these hormones to grow. These cancers are called **estrogen-positive** or **progesterone-positive**.

What does hormone treatment do?

- It can keep breast cancer cells from growing.
- It can keep breast cancer cells from spreading.
- It can keep breast cancer cells from coming back.

Who gets hormone treatment?

- Women in the early stages of breast cancer.
- Women whose breast cancer is **estrogen-positive**.
- Women whose breast cancer has spread.

Kinds of hormone treatment

There are two kinds of hormone treatment.

1. Drugs

One of the most common drugs is called **tamoxifen**. Tamoxifen blocks the estrogen that the body makes. Another kind of drug used is an **aromatase inhibitor**. This kind of drug stops the body from making estrogen.

2. Surgery to remove the ovaries

This stops them from making hormones that can help breast cancer grow.



Questions to ask your doctor about hormone treatment.

- How will hormone treatment help me?
- Is it better for me to take pills or to have my ovaries removed?
- What drug will I take? How will I know if it is working?
- How will the treatment make me feel?
- What can I do if the treatment makes me feel sick?
- Will I need other treatment besides hormones?



Talking to your doctor about treatment

Writing down your questions before you talk to the doctor can help you remember them. It may also help to take a family member or friend with you.

How can I find out more about treatment for breast cancer?

- Call the West Virginia Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program (WVBCCSP) at 1-800-642-8522. The call is free.
- or**
- Call the Cancer Information Service at 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237). The call is free.