

Types of Breast Cancer



1 in 8 women is diagnosed with breast cancer at some point in her lifetime, and more than 40,000 women die each year from the disease. Learn the basics of six types of breast cancer.

Questions We Answer

- What is it?
- How common is it?
- What are the symptoms?
- What treatments are common?
- What is a typical prognosis?¹

Ductal Carcinoma In Situ

- Stage 0 cancer, localized within the ducts
- Most common non-invasive breast cancer; 20% of all new breast cancer cases²
- Typically no symptoms, but small lump or nipple discharge can occur
- Treatments may include radiation, lumpectomy/mastectomy, hormone therapy
- Not life threatening but correlated with an increased risk of developing invasive breast cancer

Invasive Ductal Carcinoma

- Cancer that began in the milk ducts and spread
- Most common type of breast cancer; about 80% of all breast cancers³
- Symptoms
 - Lump in breast or underarm area
 - Swelling and/or pain in the breast
 - Irritation, redness, dimpling, or thickening of breast skin
 - Nipple pain or inversion
 - Unusual discharge from the nipple⁴
- Treatments may include radiation, lumpectomy/mastectomy, hormone therapy, chemotherapy, targeted therapies
- 88% average 5-year survival⁵

Paget’s Disease of the Nipple

- Cancer cells accumulate in nipple and often spread to the areola; patients often have tumors in the affected breast
- Affects about 1–4% of all breast cancer cases⁶
- Symptoms
 - Flaky, crusty, red, or thickened skin around the nipple or areola
 - Burning, tingling, or itching
 - Pain or heightened sensitivity
 - Flattened or inverted nipple
 - Yellowish or bloody nipple discharge
- Often mistaken for symptoms of more common skin ailments like eczema
- Treatments may include radiation, lumpectomy/mastectomy, chemotherapy, hormone therapies⁷
- When no palpable tumor prior to surgery, 92–94% 5-year survival; otherwise 38–40%.⁸

Invasive Ductal Carcinoma

- Not true breast cancer; increases chances of developing breast cancer in the future
- Affects 3.9 in 10,000 women⁹
- No symptoms
- Treatment may include careful observation and risk-reducing measures such as hormonal medications or prophylactic surgery for high-risk individuals.¹⁰
- Not life threatening in itself; estimated 20–30% will develop invasive breast cancer¹¹

Invasive Lobular Carcinoma

- Cancer that began in the milk-producing lobules and spread
- Accounts for 10–15% of invasive breast cancers¹²
- Symptoms
 - May occur without symptoms
 - Hardening or thickening of breast
 - Unusual fullness or swelling
 - Breast or nipple pain or nipple inversion
 - Skin irritation or dimpling
- Treatments may include radiation, lumpectomy/mastectomy, chemotherapy, hormone or targeted therapies¹³
- 90% average 5-year survival¹⁴

Inflammatory Breast Cancer

- Aggressive, always diagnosed as late-stage cancer
- Accounts for only 1–5% of breast cancers
- Symptoms
 - Easily confused with breast infection
 - Swelling in breast or underarm
 - Rapid changes in breast appearance
 - Heaviness, pain, or warmth
 - Redness, bruising, or dimpling of skin
 - Nipple flattening or inversion¹⁵
- Treatments may include chemotherapy, mastectomy, radiation, targeted therapies
- Older data show a 65% 5-year survival when not metastatic^{16, 17}

1. Note on survival rates—Prognosis depends on numerous factors, including cancer stage, grade, hormone receptor status, and the individual patient, but overall average survival rates are given. Be aware that current survival rates tend to be higher than statistics show because prognoses improve with medical advances. | 2. "DCIS — Ductal Carcinoma In Situ." Breastcancer.org. 18 Feb 2017. Accessed 21 Nov 2017. | 3. "IDC – Invasive Ductal Carcinoma." Breastcancer.org. 18 Feb 2017. Accessed 21 Nov 2017. | 4. Ibid. | 5. Survival rates: "Breast Cancer Survival Rates for All Types of Breast Cancers." Moose & Doc Breast Cancer. Steven Halls, MD. 27 Nov 2017. Accessed 28 Nov 2017. | 6. "Paget Disease of the Breast." Cancer.gov. National Institutes of Health, 10 April 2012. Accessed 1 Dec 2017. | 7. "Paget's Disease of the Nipple." Breastcancer.org. 12 April 2017. Accessed 1 Dec 2017. | 8. Schwartz, Robert A. "Mammary Paget Disease." Medscape.com. WebMD LLC, 17 July 2017. Accessed 21 Nov 2017. | 9. "Special Section/ Breast Carcinoma in Situ." Cancer.org. American Cancer Society, 2015. Accessed 28 Nov 2017. | 10. "LCIS—Lobular Carcinoma in Situ." Breastcancer.org. 18 Feb 2017. Accessed 1 Dec 2017. | 11. "Invasive Lobular Carcinoma and Lobular Carcinoma in Situ." Moose & Doc Breast Cancer. Steven Halls, MD. 28 Nov 2017. Accessed 28 Nov 2017. | 12. "Invasive Lobular Carcinoma (ILC)." Hopkinsmedicine.org. The Johns Hopkins University, 14 Feb 2017. Accessed 21 Nov 2017. | 13. "ILC—Invasive Lobular Carcinoma." Breastcancer.org. 18 Feb 2017. Accessed 1 Dec 2017. | 14. Survival rates: "Breast Cancer Survival Rates for All Types of Breast Cancers." Moose & Doc Breast Cancer. Steven Halls, MD. 27 Nov 2017. Accessed 28 Nov 2017. | 15. "Inflammatory Breast Cancer." MayoClinic.org. Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research, 31 May 2017. Accessed 1 Dec 2017. | 16. "Locally Advanced or Inflammatory Breast Cancer." Komen.org. Susan G Komen, 8 May 2017. Accessed 1 Dec 2017. | 17. A more recent study found 82% of women diagnosed after 2006 lived for at least 3 years, compared to 63% of women diagnosed before 2006.