



Influencing best practice in breast cancer

While survival for women with breast cancer in Australia is among the highest in the world, there is evidence that not all patients are receiving the most appropriate care or getting the information they need about the options that are right for them. This unwarranted variation has the potential to have an impact on patient outcomes and experience.

About the Statement

The aim of the *Cancer Australia Statement – Influencing best practice in breast cancer* is to iron out unwarranted variations in breast cancer care in Australia.

The Statement is a summary of 12 practices that have been identified as appropriate or inappropriate for the provision of evidence-based, patient-centred breast cancer care in Australia. It highlights what 'ought to be done' in breast cancer care to maximise clinical benefit, minimise harm and deliver patient-centred care.

Not every practice will be relevant for all people diagnosed with breast cancer. The practice(s) relevant to an individual will depend on the type and stage of their breast cancer, their age, and where they are in their breast cancer journey.



HOW WAS THE STATEMENT DEVELOPED?

Cancer Australia took a highly collaborative, consultative and evidence-based approach to the development of the Statement. People with cancer were an integral part of the process, which brought key clinical and cancer organisations together with women with breast cancer to identify priority areas of practice.

USING THE STATEMENT

The Statement aims to empower people with breast cancer to engage with their health professionals and make informed, evidence-based decisions that deliver the best outcomes for them.

You may wish to talk with your health professionals about the practices in the Statement and about the options available to you.

For more information about the Statement visit canceraustralia.gov.au/statement



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Not appropriate to perform a mastectomy without first discussing with the patient the options of immediate or delayed breast reconstruction.

WHAT THIS PRACTICE IS ABOUT

In Australia, approximately 4 out of 10 women diagnosed with breast cancer have a mastectomy (removal of the whole breast).

Breast reconstruction is surgery to rebuild a breast shape after mastectomy. It can help to improve body image and self-esteem and enhance quality of life. Women have reported several benefits of undergoing breast reconstruction, including feeling comfortable and 'whole', decreased psychological distress and thinking less about breast cancer.

Not all women decide to have a breast reconstruction, as it does involve additional operations.

Breast reconstruction after a mastectomy does not affect the chances of the breast cancer coming back, or overall survival.

WHY THIS PRACTICE MIGHT BE IMPORTANT TO YOU

If you are going to have a mastectomy, you may wish to consider breast reconstruction.

Breast reconstruction can happen at the same time as the surgery for your mastectomy, or it may be done some time later in separate operation(s). Having a breast reconstruction will not affect the chance of breast cancer coming back, and it may improve your overall wellbeing.

Having a discussion about the option of breast reconstruction with your doctor before you have a mastectomy can help you choose what will be best for you.

MORE INFORMATION

More information about other recommended practices and the Statement is available at canceraustralia.gov.au/statement



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