

2 Appropriate to communicate effectively and sensitively in a culturally safe environment with metastatic breast cancer patients and their families, and provide timely, comprehensive, patient-centred information on matters including:

- ▶ prognosis and the intent of treatment
- ▶ potential benefits and harms of treatment (including complementary and alternative therapies)
- ▶ cost and practical implications of treatment
- ▶ supportive and palliative care.

WHAT THIS PRACTICE IS ABOUT

This practice highlights the importance of good two-way communication between health professionals and people with metastatic breast cancer. It is about how health professionals talk, listen and answer questions, and about making sure people affected and their families have the information they need at the right time.

Good communication is built on a relationship of trust. It is critical that health professionals communicate clearly and sensitively, taking account of any language or cultural considerations. People with metastatic breast cancer and their families should feel able to ask questions and talk about what is important to them. This can empower people to be actively involved in managing their cancer, and to make informed choices about their treatment and care.

It is important that health professionals provide information about why different treatments or types of care are (or are not) recommended, including possible benefits and harms of treatment (including for complementary and alternative treatments), suitable clinical trials, as well as any out-of-pocket costs.

Information about likely prognosis should also be provided if an individual asks for this.

Everyone has their own preference for the amount and type of information given to them. How much information is given and when it is given should take account of each person's individual preferences, values and beliefs.

WHY THIS PRACTICE MIGHT BE IMPORTANT FOR YOU

Clear and trusted information will help you understand your diagnosis of metastatic breast cancer and your treatment and care options. It is important that you are able to communicate openly with your health professionals. Information you are given – in person and in writing – should be easy to understand and take account of your individual preferences, values and beliefs.

You and your family can ask for as much or as little information as you feel you need. Ask questions whenever you need to and check if there are things you do not understand.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

How do I let my team know what's important to me?

Is it OK to talk about things that I haven't been asked about?

Where can I find out more information? Is there somebody else I can talk to?

MORE INFORMATION

For more information on the **Cancer Australia Statement – Influencing best practice in metastatic breast cancer** and to access supporting resources, visit canceraustralia.gov.au/statement



Australian Government
Cancer Australia

canceraustralia.gov.au/statement

Influencing best practice in metastatic breast cancer

Metastatic breast cancer is cancer that has spread from the breast to other parts of the body. It is also known as advanced breast cancer or secondary breast cancer. People with metastatic breast cancer experience a range of emotional, physical and practical challenges.

The aim of treatment and care for people with metastatic breast cancer is to control the growth and spread of the cancer, relieve symptoms and help people live as well as possible. There is evidence that approaches to treatment and care vary across Australia.

It is important that everyone with metastatic breast cancer receives evidence-based information, treatment and support that reflect their individual needs and preferences. This includes avoiding treatments that may not provide meaningful benefits or may cause harm.

ABOUT THE STATEMENT

The aim of the *Cancer Australia Statement – Influencing best practice in metastatic breast cancer* is to reduce unwarranted variation in the treatment and care of people with metastatic breast cancer in Australia.

The Statement focuses on 10 practices that have been identified as appropriate or inappropriate in the treatment and care of people with metastatic breast cancer, to help them to live as well as possible. This includes providing the treatment and care that is most likely to benefit the patient, and avoiding treatments that are unlikely to help, or that may be harmful.

Not every practice is relevant for every person diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer. The practice(s) relevant to an individual will depend on their diagnosis and situation.

HOW WAS THE STATEMENT DEVELOPED?

The Statement is based on available national and international evidence and was developed with input from a range of experts and people affected by metastatic breast cancer. The Statement has the support of key clinical colleges, cancer and consumer organisations.

USING THE STATEMENT

The Statement aims to empower people with metastatic breast cancer and their families to make informed decisions about treatment and care that are right for them. A key part of informed decision making is to talk to health professionals and ask questions about available options for treatment, care and support.

You may wish to talk to your health professionals about which practices in the Statement are most relevant for you. Each practice includes a few questions that you may find helpful to guide conversations about your treatment and care options.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information on the *Cancer Australia Statement – Influencing best practice in metastatic breast cancer* and to access supporting resources, visit **Cancer Australia** website.



Australian Government
Cancer Australia

canceraustralia.gov.au/statement