

BREAST CANCER FACT SHEET

WHAT IS BREAST CANCER?

- Breast cancer is a malignant tumor that has developed from cells within the breast.¹

HOW COMMON IS IT?

- The American Cancer Society estimates that Breast Cancer accounts for 1 out of every 3 cancers diagnosed in the U.S.¹
- Breast cancer is the most frequently diagnosed cancer in women. Approximately 180,000 new cases of breast cancer will be diagnosed in women in the US in 2007.⁴
- More women in the US are living with breast cancer than with any other cancer. Approximately 3 million women in the US are living with breast cancer, more than 2 million have been diagnosed with the disease and an estimated 1 million do not yet know they have the disease.²

ARE THERE DIFFERENT TYPES OF BREAST CANCER?

- The two kinds of *non-invasive* breast cancer are ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS) and lobular carcinoma in situ (LCIS). Starting in either the milk passages (ducts) or the milk-producing glands (lobules), these cancers do not penetrate beyond the walls into surrounding tissues.¹
- The two most prevalent types of *invasive* breast cancer also either start in the ducts or the lobules, however these cancers have the potential to involve the fatty tissue of the breast. From this point, it may spread (metastasize) to other parts of the body.¹
 - Invasive ductal carcinoma is the most common type of breast cancer, accounting for about 80 percent of breast malignancies.¹
 - Lobular carcinoma accounts for about 10 percent of invasive breast cancers.¹
 - Other types of invasive breast cancer include inflammatory breast cancer and metaplastic breast cancer.

WHAT IS ADVANCED BREAST CANCER?

- Advanced breast cancer describes stages of cancer where the disease has spread from the primary site to other parts of the body. This is also known as metastatic breast cancer.¹
- The five-year relative survival rate is lower among women with a more advanced stage of cancer at diagnosis.¹

WHAT IS THE PROGNOSIS FOR WOMEN WITH BREAST CANCER?

- Based on the most recent data, relative survival rates for women diagnosed with breast cancer are: 88 percent at 5 years after diagnosis, 80 percent after 10 years, 71 percent after 15 years and 63 percent after 20 years.¹
- Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death for women in the US (after lung cancer) and is the *leading* cause of cancer death for women worldwide.¹
- From 1990 to 2002, death rates have decreased. The decline has been attributed to both improvements in breast cancer treatment and early detection.¹

WHAT ARE THE RISK FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH BREAST CANCER?

- Some known risk factors for breast cancer include: family history of the disease especially in a mother or sister, beginning menstrual periods at a young age (early menarche) and ending periods at an older age (late menopause), genetic factors and obesity.²

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT TREATMENT OPTIONS FOR WOMEN WITH BREAST CANCER?

- The current methods of treatment in use in the US are: radiation, chemotherapy, hormonal therapy, and biological therapy, including, monoclonal antibody therapy and finally surgery (mastectomy and lumpectomy).²
- Complementary and alternative medical (CAM) therapies offer patients the opportunity to try therapies to improve quality of life and to relieve treatment and disease-related symptoms. Some common examples are acupuncture, meditation and herbal supplements.³
- There is a constant search for new and better ways to treat breast cancer. Advances over the last few decades have extended survival and improved the quality of life of breast cancer patients.
- Some of the most exciting new treatments are the targeted therapies that, unlike many of today's standard treatments, are designed to attack the cancer cells while leaving normal cells unharmed. Such targeted therapies can help limit side effects and potentially improve survival.

References

1. "Breast Cancer Facts & Figures 2005-2006." American Cancer Society. <http://www.cancer.org.htm> (March 1, 2007).
2. "Facts About Breast Cancer: Year 2006" The National Breast Cancer Coalition. <http://www.stopbreastcancer.org> (March 1, 2007).
3. "ABC's of Breast Cancer Guide." Susan G. Komen Foundation. <http://www.komen.org> (March 1, 2007).
4. "Cancer Facts & Figures 2007." American Cancer Society, http://www.cancer.org/docroot/STT/content/STT_1x_Cancer_Facts_Figures_2007.asp (March 5, 2007).