Genetic and Genomic Testing

Genetic testing is performed on a tissue sample as part of your cancer care. This test looks for genetic mutations in your DNA that may increase your risk of developing cancer or determine how your cancer will respond to treatment. Your doctor may recommend genetic testing if you have a family history of cancer or if you have been diagnosed with a cancer type that is commonly linked to genetic mutations.

The results of your genetic test can help guide your treatment plan. For example, if your test shows that you have a mutation in the BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene, your doctor may recommend additional cancer screening or targeted treatments.

Engaging With Your Medical Team

It's important to be an active participant in your care. This means being prepared with questions and concerns, taking notes during appointments, and following up on any recommendations your doctor makes.

Here are some tips for engaging with your medical team:

Understand your treatment options

- Be prepared to discuss your treatment options with your doctor. This includes asking about different types of treatment, such as surgery, radiation, or chemotherapy.
- Make sure you understand the risks and benefits of each treatment option.
- Ask your doctor about the success rates of different treatment options.
- Discuss with your doctor how you can help yourself during treatment, such as managing side effects.

Communicate your concerns and questions

- Be honest with your doctor about how you are feeling. This can help your doctor adjust your treatment plan if necessary.
- Don't hesitate to ask your doctor any questions you may have. Your doctor should be able to explain your treatment options in a way that you can understand.
- Share your goals for treatment with your doctor. This can help your doctor tailor your treatment plan to meet your needs.

Make a detailed care plan

- Work with your doctor to create a personalized care plan that includes your treatment options, goals, and expectations.
- Make sure you understand your responsibilities during treatment, such as taking medications as prescribed or attending follow-up appointments.
- Take notes during appointments and carry a copy of your care plan.

Take care of your physical and emotional health

- Take steps to take care of your physical and emotional health during treatment. This may include getting regular exercise, maintaining a healthy diet, and seeking support from friends and family.
- Make sure you have a support system in place to help you through treatment.
- Consider joining a support group or seeking counseling if you need extra support.

Managing Metastatic Breast Cancer

Metastatic breast cancer is a serious condition that requires ongoing care. Here are some tips for managing metastatic breast cancer:

- Work with your doctor to create a personalized treatment plan that includes your goals and expectations.
- Discuss with your doctor how you can manage side effects of treatment.
- Make sure you understand your responsibilities during treatment, such as taking medications as prescribed or attending follow-up appointments.
- Take notes during appointments and carry a copy of your care plan.
- Consider joining a support group or seeking counseling if you need extra support.
- Find ways to take care of your physical and emotional health during treatment. This may include getting regular exercise, maintaining a healthy diet, and seeking support from friends and family.

Your care plan should include the following:

- Your treatment goals
- A list of medications and dosages
- Your doctor’s contact information
- A schedule for follow-up appointments
- Information about resources in your area, such as support groups or counseling services

Your care team may include:

- Your doctor
- A nurse or other medical staff
- A social worker
- A nutritionist
- A pharmacist
- A psychologist or counselor

The National Breast Cancer Foundation offers a free patient navigation service to help patients find the resources they need.

Learn more about your treatment plan

- Ask your doctor about your treatment plan and any questions you may have.
- Make a list of questions to ask your doctor before your next appointment.
- Review your treatment plan with your doctor to make sure you understand it.
- Make a list of resources you may need, such as support groups or counseling services.
- Consider joining a support group or seeking counseling if you need extra support.
- Find ways to take care of your physical and emotional health during treatment. This may include getting regular exercise, maintaining a healthy diet, and seeking support from friends and family.

Your care plan should include the following:

- Your treatment goals
- A list of medications and dosages
- Your doctor’s contact information
- A schedule for follow-up appointments
- Information about resources in your area, such as support groups or counseling services

Your care team may include:

- Your doctor
- A nurse or other medical staff
- A social worker
- A nutritionist
- A pharmacist
- A psychologist or counselor

The National Breast Cancer Foundation offers a free patient navigation service to help patients find the resources they need.

Visit www.nationalbreastcancer.org to learn more about metastatic breast cancer and the resources available to you.
Qualifying for Government Benefits

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)

It instantly jumps diagnosis of metastatic breast cancer to SSDI. If you are eligible, you are eligible for SSDI. SSDI is a work-based disability insurance program. It is a program that provides monthly cash benefits to workers who become disabled on the job and meet certain eligibility requirements. SSDI is designed to help workers maintain financial security in the event of a disability.

Understanding Treatment Options

Metastatic Breast Cancer

Metastatic breast cancer occurs when breast cancer cells spread from the breast to other parts of the body. The options may include surgery, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, hormone therapy, or a combination of these treatments. The choice depends on the specific type of metastatic breast cancer and the individual patient.

Chemotherapy

Chemotherapy is a type of treatment that uses drugs to stop or slow the growth of cancer cells. Chemotherapy can be given in several ways, including intravenously, orally, or topically. Chemotherapy is often used as part of a combination treatment plan, which may also include surgery, radiation, or hormone therapy.

Hormone Therapy

Hormone therapy is a treatment that uses drugs to stop the production of hormones that help breast cancer cells grow. This type of treatment is often used for hormone receptor-positive breast cancer, which is a type of breast cancer that has receptors for hormones like estrogen and progesterone.

Understanding Vocabulary

Monoclonal Antibody: A type of protein that is made in the laboratory to bind to a particular substance in the body, including a tumor cell. Monoclonal antibodies are used to target cancer cells or to deliver drugs to cancer cells.

Advanced Directives

Advanced directives, also known as living wills or medical directives, are legal documents that allow you to express your wishes about medical treatment in advance, should you be unable to make decisions for yourself. Advanced directives include a living will, which allows you to make decisions about life-sustaining treatment, and a power of attorney, which gives someone the authority to make medical decisions on your behalf.

Power of Attorney

A power of attorney is a legal document that allows you to appoint someone to make decisions on your behalf if you are unable to do so. A power of attorney can be either durable or for limited time. A durable power of attorney gives your agent the authority to make decisions for you, even if you are unable to make decisions for yourself. A limited power of attorney gives your agent the authority to make decisions only for a specific period of time or for specific purposes.

Palliative Care

Palliative care is a type of care that focuses on improving the quality of life for people with serious illness. It is not curative and is provided to people with serious illness, regardless of the stage of their disease. It is provided concurrently with other treatment options, such as chemotherapy, radiation, or surgery. Palliative care can help improve symptoms, reduce pain and discomfort, and provide emotional support.

Qualifying for Social Security Disability Insurance

In order to be eligible for SSDI, you must have worked and earned a certain amount of money during your working years. You must also have a medical condition that meets the SSDI program's definition of disability. This includes a condition that meets the criteria for disability, as determined by the Social Security Administration (SSA).

Qualifying for Veterans Benefits

Veterans Benefits

Veterans Benefits is a program that provides financial support and other benefits to veterans and their families. Benefits may include compensation for service-connected disabilities, education assistance, burial benefits, and more. Eligibility for veterans benefits depends on your military service and the type of benefit you are seeking.

Paid Leave

Employed Breast Cancer Patients

Federal Workplace Protections Critical to Employed Metastatic Breast Cancer Patients

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is a federal law that provides leave to employees who need to take time off from work due to a serious health condition. FMLA leave can be used for the employee's own serious health condition, the serious health condition of a family member, or the adoption of a child.

Understanding the Basics of FMLA

FMLA leave is available to eligible employees for the following reasons:

- Serious health condition that may be treated as a disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Birth or adoption of a child
- Care for a sick child
- Care for a sick parent
- Care for a sick spouse

Eligibility requirements for FMLA leave include:

- Employment status: The employee must have been employed for at least 12 months and have worked for at least 1,250 hours in the past 12 months.
- Relationship: The employee must have a relationship with the employer, such as an employee-employer relationship.
- Eligibility: The employee must have a serious health condition that requires inpatient care or continuing treatment.

Qualifying for FMLA

To qualify for FMLA leave, the employee must have worked for at least 12 months and have worked for at least 1,250 hours in the past 12 months. The employee must also have a relationship with the employer, such as an employee-employer relationship.

Understanding Rights and Protections

Employees who qualify for FMLA leave have the following rights and protections:

- Continuation of health benefits
- Continuation of pension benefits
- Continuation of any other benefit program

Understanding Restrictions

FMLA leave cannot be used for the following reasons:

- Maternity leave
- Adoption leave
- Care for a non-family member

Understanding the FMLA Process

The process for obtaining FMLA leave includes:

- Notification: The employee must notify the employer in writing of the need for FMLA leave.
- Approval: The employer must approve the FMLA leave request.
- Extension: The employer can extend the FMLA leave for an additional 36-month period if the employee is still eligible for FMLA leave.

Understanding the Future of FMLA

The FMLA is a federal law, and its protections are not affected by state laws. However, some states have their own laws that provide additional protections for employees.

Understanding the Importance ofFMLA

FMLA is an important law that protects employees who need to take time off from work for a serious health condition. It is a valuable tool for employers who want to support their employees and ensure that they are able to return to work in a healthy and productive manner.
Qualifying for Government Benefits

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)

SSDI is designed to provide benefits to individuals who have become disabled at any age. To qualify for SSDI, a person must have contributed adequately and have a medical condition that prevents them from performing any substantial gainful activity. SSDI benefits are based on the worker’s past work history.

Medicare (under Social Security), which is a federal health insurance program for people who are 65 or older. People who are younger than age 65 may qualify for Medicare if they have certain disabilities or conditions.

State Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI)

TDI is a temporary disability insurance program that provides benefits to workers who become unable to work due to a physical or health condition that is not job-related.

State Unemployment Compensation (UC)

UC provides temporary weekly payments to individuals who lose their jobs through no fault of their own.

Understanding Treatment Options

Many people are not satisfied with what they are being told or with the type of treatment their doctor has recommended.

Maximizing Comfort and Trust in Your Medical Team

It is important to talk to your medical team about any anxiety related to cost with your treatment. Discuss financial concerns with your doctor. Your trust in and cooperation with your doctor may open up a dialogue that could lead to a better outcome.

Compensatory allocautions for treatments, medicare, or other financial arrangements are available. Your insurance company may have a specific policy for compensatory allocaations for treatments.

Potentially Insurance Complications with Chemotherapy

Many financial arrangements are available, offering options to help you manage your care.

Palliative Care

Palliative care is designed to help people with serious illness manage pain and other symptoms. It is provided at any stage of a serious illness and can be provided along with other types of care.

Legal paperwork relevant to patients

Legal paperwork relevant to patients

You can also designate a Power of Attorney, which allows you to provide instructions for your medical care when you are not able to do it for yourself. You need to have an advanced directive to appoint a Power of Attorney.

Federal Workplace Protections Critical to Employed Metastatic Breast Cancer Patients

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is a federal law that provides employees with unpaid family and medical leave. The FMLA protects the privacy of metastatic breast cancer patients or other forms of active treatment you are receiving to treat your cancer, and be aware of any other forms of active treatment you may be receiving.

Tumor Response:

A protein found inside some cancer cells.

Monoclonal Antibody:

Any change in the DNA sequence of a cell. Mutations can be harmful, leading to the development of other diseases.

Mutation:

Radioactive materials directly to cancer cells. They can be used to destroy cancer cells, or during the hiring process. ADA also protects the privacy of metastatic breast cancer patients.

Targeted Therapy:

Therapies, although they usually only affect the cancer cells that are involved in the growth of cancer cells. They are categorized differently by the type of treatment your doctor has recommended.

Chemoimmunotherapy – treatment that uses both chemotherapy and immunotherapy in order to enhance the growth of cancer cells. They are categorized differently.

Targeted drugs block specific proteins involved in the growth of cancer cells. They can be used to destroy cancer cells, or during the hiring process. ADA also protects the privacy of metastatic breast cancer patients.

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Potential Insurance Complications with Chemotherapy

Many of your medical treatments are covered by the insurance plan that you or your employer selected. However, for treatments such as chemotherapy and radiation therapy, you will need to check the fine print and make sure that you understand what is covered and what is not. It is possible that you may need to pay for some treatments out-of-pocket or find ways to get additional funding to help cover the costs. If you have any questions about insurance coverage, please speak with your healthcare team.

Understanding Treatment Options

Metastatic breast cancer is a serious and sometimes fatal disease. It can spread to other parts of the body, making it more difficult to treat. There are several different types of treatment that can be used to help manage metastatic breast cancer. The type of treatment that you choose should be discussed with your healthcare team. They will consider factors such as the location and size of the tumors, your overall health, and your preferences when making a treatment decision.

Understanding treatment options

The type of treatment that you choose will depend on how advanced your disease is, the location and size of the tumors, your overall health, and your preferences. Treatment options may include chemotherapy, radiation therapy, hormone therapy, surgery, or a combination of these treatments. Your healthcare team will discuss with you the potential benefits and risks of each treatment option and help you make the best decision for your situation.

Precision medicine

Chemotherapy – treatment that kills cells that divide uncontrollably in the hope of reducing the growth of rapidly dividing cancer cells. Usually administered as a group of drugs together, it can be given directly into the bloodstream or through a catheter inserted into a vein.

Surgery – a procedure to remove the tumor and its surrounding tissue. Surgery can be used to treat metastatic breast cancer.

Hormone therapy – treatment that blocks the production of hormones that can cause breast cancer cells to grow. It is used to treat hormone-sensitive metastatic breast cancer.

Clinical trials

Clinical trials are research studies that test new treatments or drugs to determine their safety and effectiveness. If you are interested in participating in a clinical trial, you should speak with your healthcare team.

Addressing Areas of Your Care That May Be Hard to Access

Palliative care

Palliative care focuses on providing relief from pain and other symptoms of an advanced illness. It is a supportive care approach that aims to improve the quality of life for patients with advanced cancer and their families.

For metastatic breast cancer patients, the goal of palliative care is to help them manage symptoms and improve their quality of life. Palliative care can be provided alongside active treatment and may include medications, therapies, and support services.

Palliative care is often provided in the home or in a hospice facility. It can also be provided in other settings, such as a hospital or a skilled nursing facility.

Palliative care is available without regard to a patient’s ability to pay for it. It is covered by most health insurance plans.

After successful treatment

If you have completed successful treatment for metastatic breast cancer, your healthcare team will work with you to determine if you are eligible for follow-up care. Follow-up care may include regular check-ups and testing to monitor for recurrence.

Frequently asked questions

What are the options for metastatic breast cancer treatment?

There are several treatment options available for metastatic breast cancer, including chemotherapy, hormone therapy, surgery, and radiation therapy. The specific treatment options will depend on the size and location of the tumors, as well as your overall health.

What is the role of chemotherapy in metastatic breast cancer treatment?

Chemotherapy is a type of treatment used to kill cancer cells. It is often used in combination with other treatments, such as hormone therapy or surgery.

What is hormone therapy used for in metastatic breast cancer treatment?

Hormone therapy is used to treat metastatic breast cancer in patients whose tumors are hormone-sensitive. It works by blocking the production of hormones that can cause breast cancer cells to grow.

What is the role of surgery in metastatic breast cancer treatment?

Surgery is often used to remove metastatic breast cancer tumors. It can be used to remove a single tumor or to remove multiple tumors.

What is the role of radiation therapy in metastatic breast cancer treatment?

Radiation therapy is used to treat metastatic breast cancer tumors that are located in the brain, spine, or other parts of the body. It can be used to shrink tumors or to destroy cancer cells.

What is the role of clinical trials in metastatic breast cancer treatment?

Clinical trials are research studies that test new treatments or drugs to determine their safety and effectiveness. They can provide new treatment options for patients with metastatic breast cancer.

How can I find information about clinical trials for metastatic breast cancer?

To find information about clinical trials for metastatic breast cancer, you can ask your healthcare team or search online for clinical trials that are currently recruiting.

What is the role of support services in metastatic breast care?

Support services are available to help patients and their families manage the challenges of metastatic breast cancer. They can include counseling, support groups, and other resources.

What are the options for hospice care for metastatic breast cancer patients?

Hospice care is a type of palliative care that provides end-of-life care for patients with advanced cancer. It focuses on providing relief from pain and other symptoms, as well as support for patients and their families.

What is the role of family and friends in metastatic breast cancer care?

Family and friends play an important role in metastatic breast cancer care. They can provide emotional support, help with daily tasks, and offer advice.

What is the role of emotional support in metastatic breast cancer care?

Emotional support is important in metastatic breast cancer care. It can help patients and their families manage the challenges of living with metastatic breast cancer.

What are the options for end-of-life care in metastatic breast cancer?

End-of-life care is focused on providing relief from pain and other symptoms, as well as support for patients and their families. It can include hospice care, chemotherapy, and other treatments.

What should I do if I experience side effects from metastatic breast cancer treatment?

If you experience side effects from metastatic breast cancer treatment, you should speak with your healthcare team. They can help you manage the side effects and adjust your treatment plan if necessary.

What are the options for managing metastatic breast cancer symptoms?

Symptoms of metastatic breast cancer can be managed with medication, therapy, and support services. Your healthcare team can help you choose the best options for managing your symptoms.

What is the role of follow-up care in metastatic breast cancer treatment?

Follow-up care is important in metastatic breast cancer treatment. It helps to monitor for recurrence and adjust treatment as needed.

What is the role of nutrition in metastatic breast cancer care?

Nutrition is an important aspect of metastatic breast cancer care. It can help patients maintain their energy levels and improve their overall quality of life.

What are the options for metastatic breast cancer support groups?

Support groups can provide emotional support and information for patients with metastatic breast cancer.

What is the role of complementary and alternative therapies in metastatic breast cancer care?

Complementary and alternative therapies are therapies that are used to treat or manage symptoms of metastatic breast cancer. They are not considered standard treatments.

What is the role of genetic counseling in metastatic breast cancer care?

Genetic counseling is important in metastatic breast cancer care. It can help patients understand their risk for inherited cancer and make informed decisions about treatment.

What are the options for metastatic breast cancer research?

Research is important in metastatic breast cancer care. It helps to improve treatment options and provide new insights into the disease.

What are the options for metastatic breast cancer advocacy?

Advocacy is important in metastatic breast cancer care. It can help patients and their families access the care they need and advocate for better treatment options.

How can I find information about metastatic breast cancer research?

To find information about metastatic breast cancer research, you can ask your healthcare team or search online for research studies that are currently being conducted.

What is the role of metastatic breast cancer support websites?

Support websites can provide information and resources for patients with metastatic breast cancer. They can also help patients connect with others who have similar experiences.

What should I do if I have questions about metastatic breast cancer care?

If you have questions about metastatic breast cancer care, you should speak with your healthcare team. They can provide you with the information you need to make informed decisions about your treatment.

What is the role of metastatic breast cancer insurance coverage?

Insurance coverage for metastatic breast cancer treatment can vary. It is important to understand what your insurance plan covers and what you may need to pay out-of-pocket.

What are the options for metastatic breast cancer support services?

Support services are available to help patients and their families manage the challenges of metastatic breast cancer. They can include counseling, support groups, and other resources.

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What should I do if I have questions about metastatic breast cancer care?

If you have questions about metastatic breast cancer care, you should speak with your healthcare team. They can provide you with the information you need to make informed decisions about your treatment.
Genetic and Genomic Testing

Genetic testing, or detecting changes in your DNA, can help you understand your risk for developing certain diseases. Genetic testing can tell you whether you have a gene that raises your risk of developing a disease, or whether you’re likely to get a disease if you already have a gene that causes it. Genetic testing can also help you understand how genetic factors might affect the treatment or course of your disease. It can help you and your family make informed decisions about your health. Genetic testing is widely available and is covered by most health insurance plans.

Genetic Testing

Genetic testing is done in one of three main ways:

1. Blood test: A small sample of blood is collected through a finger prick or a venipuncture. The blood test can look for a specific gene or a change in the structure of a specific chromosome.
2. Skin biopsy: A small piece of skin is removed and examined under a microscope. This test is usually done to look for an inherited disorder that affects the skin.
3. Tissue sample: A sample of tissue is removed from a tumor or other part of the body for examination. This test is usually done to look for a genetic change that is causing a tumor to grow.

Vocabulary to Know

- Genotype: The genetic makeup of an individual, which includes all the genes they have.
- Phenotype: The observable characteristics of an individual, which can be influenced by both genetic and environmental factors.
- Autosomal dominant: A type of genetic inheritance where a single gene is passed from one parent to the other.
- Autosomal recessive: A type of genetic inheritance where a person must inherit two copies of a gene to show the trait.
- X-linked: A type of genetic inheritance where a gene is passed from a parent to a child on the X chromosome.

My BC Team

www.metavivor.org

METAvivor
Men Against Breast Cancer

www.lazarex.org

Know Your Breast Cancer
www.facingourrisk.org

FORCE: Facing Our Risk of
www.advancedbc.org

Cancer and Careers
www.cancerandcareers.org

Breast Cancer Guide
www.BreastCancer.org

Breast Cancer Trials
www.BreastCancerTrials.org

Young Survival Coalition
www.youngsurvival.org

Triple Step Toward The Cure
www.triplestep.org

Nueva Vida
www.nuevavidasolo.org

Social Network

National Underinsured
www.metastatic_breast_cancer_metastasis.aspx

Patient Resources, Inc.

National Cancer Institute
www.cancer.gov

Cancer Guide
Metastatic Breast

Prepared by: Dr. Laura Flaxman, Metastatic Breast Cancer Guide

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For more information, please visit www.metastatic_breast_cancer_guide.com.
grow. Also called ER.

A protein found inside some targeted hormonal therapies.

that your cancer may respond to testing can identify your chances of making proteins that help control cell growth of breast cancer cells.

may be given to interfere with synthetic hormones or other drugs stop the growth of breast cancer, treatment that adds, blocks, or alters the body's ability to stimulate the immune system or chemotherapy.

Therapies that alter the genetic of cancer cells. These new treatment options that target specific genetic changes in cancer cells. These new treatment options that target specific
does not qualify for a clinical trial, you may Accessing Investigational Drugs - including protected leave under the Family Drug Administration, to access, there must be an overwhelming experience – one that leaves you feeling numb, frightened, vulnerable and alone even when you are surrounded by family and friends. This is a time when you need to get yourself first. Metastatic breast cancer can be very overwhelming if you can’t believe. Be informed about all of your treatment options, and have a clear head when you are making decisions regarding how you want to proceed.

In your treatment plan, you get to decide on your treatment advice specifically for Metastatic Breast Cancer. This guide delivers expert advice specifically for Metastatic Breast Cancer patients to help avoid common misunderstandings and care barriers.

Engaging With Your Medical Team

When faced with a metastatic breast cancer diagnosis, it's important to know the basics of a medical team to make sure you're getting the best care possible. 

• Do you have any questions about your treatment plan? 

• Who has your breast cancer experience? Look inside for details on accessing protections.

• Do you delay seeking care due to your medical condition?

• Who do you recommend I see for a second opinion?