

You've Just Been Diagnosed with Breast Cancer

10 Questions Your Future Self Will Be Glad You Asked Today

Presented by

LIVE Today

lymphlines

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What kind of breast cancer do I have—and what does that mean for my treatment options?

Why This Matters

No two breast cancers are exactly alike. Understanding your diagnosis is the foundation for making informed decisions about your treatment. While the medical terminology may feel overwhelming at first, asking questions now can help you feel more confident and engaged in your care.

Questions You Might Ask

- What type of breast cancer do I have?
- What stage is my cancer?
- Is it hormone receptor-positive or HER2-positive?
- Has the cancer spread beyond my breast?
- What treatment options do you recommend, and why?

Helpful Answers Might Include...

- A clear explanation of your diagnosis in language you understand.
- An explanation of why your treatment plan is recommended for your specific cancer.
- A discussion of treatment options and expected outcomes.
- An opportunity to ask questions until you feel comfortable with the plan.

Dr. Sheri® Perspective

"One of the greatest fears after hearing the words 'You have breast cancer' is not knowing what comes next. Knowledge won't eliminate the fear, but it will help replace uncertainty with understanding."



2

Who should be part of my healthcare team?

Why This Matters

Breast cancer treatment often involves much more than surgery or chemotherapy. You deserve a team that addresses your physical, emotional, and long-term health throughout your journey.

Questions You Might Ask

- Who will coordinate my care?
- Which specialists will I meet with?
- Which specialists will I meet with?
- Which specialists will I meet with?
- Is there a nurse navigator or patient advocate available?

Helpful Answers Might Include...

- An explanation of each member of your healthcare team and their role.
- Information about support services available throughout treatment.
- A plan for coordinating your care across specialties.
- A primary point of contact if questions arise.

Dr. Sheri® Perspective

"Looking back, I realize that survivorship begins long before treatment ends. Building the right team early can make an enormous difference in your recovery."



3

What side effects should we be thinking about—not just today, but years from now?

Why This Matters

Most conversations naturally focus on treating the cancer. It's equally important to understand how treatment may affect your long-term health and quality of life so you can prepare for survivorship, not just treatment.

Questions You Might Ask

- What long-term side effects are possible with my treatment?
- Could treatment affect my heart, nerves, bones, or memory?
- Which symptoms should I report immediately?
- What can we do now to reduce future complications?

Helpful Answers Might Include...

- A discussion of both short-term and long-term side effects.
- Recommendations for monitoring your health after treatment.
- Strategies to help reduce or manage long-term complications.
- Clear guidance about symptoms that should never be ignored.

Dr. Sheri® Perspective

"As physicians, we're trained to focus on curing disease. As patients, we also have to learn how to live well after treatment is over."



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What is my personal risk of developing lymphedema, and how can we reduce that risk?

Why This Matters

Not everyone treated for breast cancer develops lymphedema, but your individual risk depends on factors such as the type of surgery you have, whether lymph nodes are removed, and whether radiation is part of your treatment. Understanding your risk before treatment begins allows you and your healthcare team to develop a plan for education, surveillance, and early intervention if needed.

Questions You Might Ask

- Am I considered at increased risk for lymphedema?
- How many lymph nodes are expected to be removed?
- Will radiation increase my risk?
- Should I have baseline measurements before surgery?
- What symptoms should I report immediately?

Helpful Answers Might Include...

- An explanation of your personal risk factors.
- A discussion about how your treatment plan may influence your risk.
- A plan for monitoring you during and after treatment.
- Guidance on recognizing and reporting early symptoms.

Dr. Sheri® Perspective

"As both a physician and a breast cancer survivor living with lymphedema, this is one conversation I wish every patient had before treatment—not because it changes your diagnosis, but because it can change how prepared you are for your survivorship journey."



5

Should I have baseline measurements before surgery or treatment?

Why This Matters

You can't recognize subtle changes if you don't know what "normal" looked like before treatment. Baseline measurements provide an important reference point for monitoring your health throughout survivorship.

Questions You Might Ask

- Do you recommend baseline measurements before treatment?
- What type of measurements will be used?
- How often should I be monitored after surgery?
- If changes are detected, what happens next?

Helpful Answers Might Include...

- A personalized plan for baseline assessment.
- An explanation of how you will be monitored over time.
- A schedule for follow-up measurements based on your level of risk.
- Information about early intervention if changes occur.

Dr. Sheri® Perspective

"You only get one opportunity to establish your baseline before treatment begins. It's a simple step that can provide valuable information throughout your survivorship journey."



6

How might treatment affect my daily life, work, and family responsibilities?

Why This Matters

Cancer doesn't only affect your body—it can affect every aspect of your life. Planning ahead can reduce stress and help you prepare for changes that may occur during treatment.

Questions You Might Ask

- Will I be able to continue working?
- What activities should I avoid?
- Will I need help at home after surgery?
- How might fatigue affect my daily routine?

Helpful Answers Might Include...

- Realistic expectations about recovery.
- Recommendations for returning to work and daily activities.
- Suggestions for accepting help from family and friends.
- Resources to support you through treatment.

Dr. Sheri® Perspective

"One of the strongest things you can do is allow others to help. Accepting support isn't a sign of weakness—it's often one of the healthiest decisions you'll make."



7

What can I do now to protect my physical and emotional health during treatment?

Why This Matters

Taking care of your overall health can help you better tolerate treatment and recover more effectively. Small, intentional choices can make a meaningful difference.

Questions You Might Ask

- Is exercise safe during treatment?
- Should I meet with a dietitian?
- Are counseling or support groups available?
- What can I do to help manage stress?

Helpful Answers Might Include...

- Safe recommendations for physical activity.
- Guidance on nutrition during treatment.
- Emotional support resources.
- Healthy strategies for managing stress and anxiety.

Dr. Sheri® Perspective

"Healing involves much more than treating cancer. Caring for your body, your mind, and your spirit is an important part of the journey."



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What financial, practical, and community resources are available to help me?

Why This Matters

No one should feel they have to navigate breast cancer alone. Many organizations offer financial assistance, educational resources, emotional support, and practical services that can make the journey easier.

Questions You Might Ask

- Is there a patient navigator?
- Are financial assistance programs available?
- Where can I find trustworthy educational resources?
- Are there local or national support organizations?

Helpful Answers Might Include...

- Information about financial assistance programs.
- Referrals to nonprofit organizations and community resources.
- Support groups and survivorship programs.
- Educational materials from trusted organizations.

Dr. Sheri® Perspective

"One lesson I've learned is that strength isn't measured by how much you carry alone. It's measured by your willingness to accept help when you need it."



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What does survivorship actually look like—and how do I prepare for it now?

Why This Matters

Survivorship doesn't begin when treatment ends—it begins the day you're diagnosed. Thinking about your long-term health early helps you prepare for life beyond cancer.

Questions You Might Ask

- What follow-up care will I need?
- How often will I be monitored?
- What lifestyle changes should I consider?
- What can I do now to support my long-term health?

Helpful Answers Might Include...

- A survivorship care plan.
- A schedule for follow-up visits and testing.
- Recommendations for healthy living after treatment.
- Resources that support your long-term recovery.

Dr. Sheri® Perspective

"I wish someone had encouraged me to think about survivorship from the very beginning. Preparing for the future doesn't distract from today's treatment—it helps protect tomorrow's quality of life."



10

When treatment is over, what kind of life do I want to return to?

Why This Matters

While your healthcare team is focused on treating your cancer, it's also important to remember that you are preparing for life after treatment. Keeping your hopes, goals, and dreams in view can provide perspective during difficult days.

Questions You Might Ask

- What can I do now to support my recovery after treatment?
- How will I know when it's safe to return to activities I enjoy?
- What signs should prompt me to seek medical attention in the future?
- How can I continue caring for my health long-term?

Helpful Answers Might Include...

- A realistic understanding of recovery.
- Encouragement to gradually return to meaningful activities.
- A plan for ongoing health maintenance.
- Hope that life after breast cancer can be full and purposeful.

Dr. Sheri® Perspective

"Cancer became part of my story, but it did not become my identity. There is life after treatment, and while it may look different than you once imagined, it can still be deeply meaningful, purposeful, and full of hope."

