



# 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](http://canceraustralia.gov.au/statement)



## 2

Appropriate to ensure optimal fixation of breast cancer specimens for accurate pathological examination and biomarker assessment.

### WHAT THIS PRACTICE IS ABOUT

When breast cancer is removed during surgery, it is examined by a pathology expert to find out information about the size and type of cancer, including its biological features. This is a critical step in the diagnosis of breast cancer and is important to guide appropriate treatment.

When breast tissue is removed by surgery it has to be 'fixed' before it can be tested. 'Tissue fixation' is a way of preserving the breast tissue. The Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia has produced guidelines on the best procedures for tissue fixation. Poor fixation of breast cancer tissue can result in inaccurate assessment.

### WHY THIS PRACTICE MIGHT BE IMPORTANT TO YOU

If you have surgery as part of your breast cancer treatment, it is important that the breast specimen is appropriately handled and prepared for pathology assessment. This will help to ensure the information about your breast cancer diagnosis is as accurate as possible and will help to inform you and your doctors/oncologists about appropriate treatment options.

A diagnosis underpinned by high quality pathological assessment supports the best outcomes for breast cancer patients.

### MORE INFORMATION

More information about other recommended practices and the Statement is available at [canceraustralia.gov.au/statement](http://canceraustralia.gov.au/statement)



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