



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



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Appropriate to offer patients with early breast cancer the opportunity for their follow-up care to be shared between a primary care physician and a specialist, to provide more accessible, whole-person care.

WHAT THIS PRACTICE IS ABOUT

Patients who have been diagnosed and treated for early breast cancer* are at risk of the cancer coming back or a new breast cancer developing.

Follow-up care is recommended following completion of active treatment so that if breast cancer does come back or if a new breast cancer develops, it can be treated promptly. Follow-up care also allows doctors to check for any side effects from treatment and provides an opportunity to offer practical and emotional support.

Shared follow-up care gives patients with early breast cancer the opportunity to have their follow-up care shared between their GP and their cancer specialist. Shared follow-up care is a safe and effective alternative to specialist follow-up.

WHY THIS PRACTICE MIGHT BE IMPORTANT TO YOU

Follow-up care that is shared between your GP and cancer specialist may be a good option for you because your GP can manage all your health concerns, rather than just focusing on follow-up for your breast cancer, providing you with greater continuity of care.

Shared follow-up care may also be more convenient for you because it reduces the need to travel to specialist services.

Shared follow-up care does not mean that your cancer specialist will not be involved. Your GP will be able to contact your cancer specialist and can refer you as needed.

Discussing the options for your breast cancer follow up to be shared between your GP and specialist will help determine the best approach for you.

MORE INFORMATION

More information about other recommended practices and the Statement is available at canceraustralia.gov.au/statement

* Early breast cancer is defined as invasive cancer that is contained in the breast, or has spread to lymph nodes in the breast or armpit, but not to other parts of the body. Some cancer cells may have spread outside the breast and armpit area but cannot be detected.

