



# 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)



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## Not appropriate to confirm or exclude a diagnosis of breast cancer without undertaking the triple test, which involves:

- ▶ taking a patient history and clinical breast examination;
- ▶ imaging tests (mammogram and/or ultrasound); and
- ▶ biopsy to remove cells or tissue for examination.

### WHAT THIS PRACTICE IS ABOUT

The most effective and accurate way to diagnose breast cancer in people who have breast symptoms (a lump or change in their breasts) is to use the 'triple test'.

The triple test uses a sequence of three steps to investigate new breast symptoms that could be due to breast cancer:

- taking a patient history and clinical examination;
- imaging tests (such as a mammogram and/or ultrasound); and
- biopsy to remove cells or tissue for pathology examination.

If any of the three steps has a result that is indeterminate (i.e. it is not possible to tell whether the result is positive or negative), suspicious or malignant, you should have further tests or be referred to a specialist. Correlation of all test results is important in determining a diagnosis for the breast symptom.

### WHY THIS PRACTICE MIGHT BE IMPORTANT TO YOU

The triple test provides a very accurate assessment of whether or not breast cancer is present.

If you do have breast cancer, a confirmed diagnosis using the triple test will enable you to have informed discussions around your treatment options.

### 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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