This NCCN QUICK GUIDE™ sheet summarizes key points from the complete NCCN Guidelines for Patients®: Breast Cancer – Invasive. These guidelines explain which tests and treatments are recommended by experts in cancer. To view and download the guidelines, visit NCCN.org/patients or, to order printed copies, visit Amazon.com.

What is invasive breast cancer?

- It is breast cancer that has grown into the breast’s fatty tissue, skin, or both but has not spread far in the body

What health care is needed before treatment?

- A report of your health history and an exam of your body
- Pictures of the insides of your breasts by mammogram and maybe ultrasound, MRI
- Pictures of your bones and organs if there may be cancer
- Removal of tissue samples to test for cancer
- Tests for two markers—hormone and HER2 receptors—within breast cancer cells
- Blood tests to check for health problems if needed
- Advice on genetic tests if there’s a risk of breast cancer within your family
- Advice on fertility methods if you may want to have a baby after cancer treatment
- Some questions about distress to see if you need help
**How is invasive cancer treated?**

- Some women first receive chemotherapy to shrink tumors before surgery. A cancer drug, called a HER2 antibody, may be added if the cancer is HER2 positive.  
- Surgery to remove the cancer is often a key part of treatment. For some women, a lumpectomy to spare breast tissue is an option. Other women receive a total mastectomy, which removes the whole breast. At least a few lymph nodes will be removed for cancer testing. Some women have breast reconstruction to reshape or rebuild their breast(s).  
- To prevent the cancer from returning, you may receive chemotherapy after surgery. Doctors decide to give chemotherapy based on many factors.  
- Most women receive radiation therapy after surgery. The breast or chest wall may be treated. Nearby lymph node may be treated as well.  
- Endocrine therapy is a standard treatment for hormone receptor–positive breast cancer. It is often taken for 5 to 10 years. It lowers the chance of the cancer returning.

**What does follow-up care involve?**

It includes tests to check your overall health and for cancer. Also, care for ongoing or new health problems caused by cancer treatment will be given. Support for a healthy lifestyle is given since treatment results may be improved.

**What if the cancer returns?**

Cancer that returns in the breast or nearby sites may be treated with surgery, radiation therapy, or both. Treatment with cancer drugs may be added.

**What are some tips for making good treatment decisions?**

- Don’t be shy and ask your doctors questions. They are there to help.  
- Get a second opinion. Even doctors get second opinions.  
- Support groups can be helpful. You can learn a lot from others.  
- Compare the pros and cons of each option.