What are stages I and II breast cancer?

- It is a cancer that started in cells that line the breast parts that make or carry breast milk.
- The cancer has grown into the breast's fatty tissue but not the breast skin or chest wall.
- The breast tumor is small and cancer is in none or a few lymph nodes near your armpit. Otherwise, the breast tumor is large and no other sites have cancer.

What options do NCCN experts recommend?

- A clinical trial is a type of research that studies new health tests and treatments. It is the treatment option that is preferred by NCCN experts. Other options are listed next.

What health care do I need before treatment?

- A report of your health history and an exam of your body
- Blood tests to check for health problems
- Pictures of the insides of your breasts by a mammogram and maybe ultrasound, MRI
- Pictures of your bones and the insides of your torso if there may be cancer
- Cancer tests of tissue from lymph nodes if they may have cancer
- Tests for two markers—hormone and HER2 receptors—within breast cancer cells
- Advice on genetic tests if breast cancer risk was likely passed down from your parents
- Advice on fertility methods if you may want to have babies after treatment
- Some questions about distress to see if you need help
What is the main treatment for stages I and II?

- It is surgery that removes the cancer in the breast and in any lymph nodes. 28
- Breast tumors will be removed by a lumpectomy, which spares breast tissue, or by total mastectomy, which removes the whole breast. 30
- Some lymph nodes will be removed for testing and maybe more if cancer is found. 34
- Your breast can be re-shaped or rebuilt after the cancer has been removed. 36

What treatments help stop the cancer from coming back?

- Chemotherapy is a group of cancer drugs that stop new cells from being made. The larger the tumor, the more likely doctors will advise taking chemotherapy. HER2 inhibitors are a type of cancer drug that blocks certain growth signals within cells. It should be given with chemotherapy for HER2-positive breast cancer. 40
- Radiation therapy uses high-energy rays to damage cancer cells. The sites that need radiation, if any, are based on how many lymph nodes near your armpit have cancer. 56
- Endocrine therapy stops cancer growth caused by hormones. It is only used for hormone receptor–positive breast cancer. The larger the tumor, the more likely doctors will advise taking endocrine therapy. 66

What does follow-up care involve?

- It includes tests of your overall health and tests to find any new breast tumors early. Ongoing or new health problems caused by cancer treatment will checked by your doctor. There may be ways to make you feel better. Support for a healthy lifestyle is given since treatment results may be improved. 76

What if the cancer returns?

- Cancer that returns in or near to where a breast is or was may be treated with surgery, radiation therapy, or both. Treatment with cancer drugs may be added. 82

How do I decide between options

- Ask your doctors many questions. Also, you could get a second opinion, use decision aids, attend support groups, and compare pros and cons. 90