



Metastatic Breast Cancer

What is it?

Metastatic breast cancer, also known as stage IV (stage 4) cancer, is breast cancer that has spread to distant organs such as the bones, lungs, liver, or brain. The cancer may have spread to just one organ or any combination of these organs. It is common to have multiple diagnostic tests to evaluate the exact location of the metastasis and to have periodic diagnostic tests to follow the extent of disease. Possible tests may include:

- blood tests such as CBC, complete chemistry, and/or tumor markers
- PET scan
- CAT scans of several different organs.

How is it treated?

A medical oncologist will prescribe a treatment plan for you based on the site(s) of metastasis and monitor the extent of your disease. It is possible that you may receive:

- chemotherapy
- radiation therapy
- hormone therapy
- biologic therapy
- any combination of these treatments

Previous treatments you received may also influence the current treatment plan. If one treatment does not help to stop the spread of your cancer your doctor may recommend a different one. The goal of treatment for this type of breast cancer is to prevent the spread of further disease and maintain the quality of life.

If you would like to speak with a social worker and learn about resources available to help you, please call 212-731-5110.