

DOCUMENT TITLE: Breast Cancer Treatment - Side Effects Overview

SOURCE: Medical oncology reference

DOMAIN: Oncology - Breast Cancer

LANGUAGE: English

DOCUMENT TYPE: Treatment Adverse Effects Overview

CLINICAL CONTEXT: Patient education (non-prescriptive)

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## ## GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF TREATMENT SIDE EFFECTS

Side effects of breast cancer treatment vary between individuals.

Some side effects occur during treatment, while others may appear months or years later.

Patients should report new or worsening symptoms to their healthcare team as early as possible.

## ## MONITORING AND REPORTING SIDE EFFECTS

Tracking symptoms helps healthcare providers manage side effects effectively.

Early reporting may allow treatment adjustments and reduce complications.

## ## CHEMOTHERAPY SIDE EFFECTS

Chemotherapy targets rapidly dividing cells, including cancer cells and some healthy cells.

Common side effects include:

- Fatigue
- Hair loss
- Nausea and vomiting
- Low white blood cell counts
- Early menopause

## ## HORMONAL THERAPY SIDE EFFECTS

Hormonal therapy reduces the effect of estrogen on breast cancer cells.

Common side effects include:

- Hot flashes
- Joint and bone pain
- Fatigue
- Weakness

## ## RADIATION THERAPY SIDE EFFECTS

Radiation therapy damages cancer cell DNA but may also affect nearby healthy tissue.

Common side effects include:

- Skin redness or peeling
- Fatigue
- Swelling

## ## IMMUNOTHERAPY AND TARGETED THERAPY SIDE EFFECTS

Immunotherapy stimulates the immune system to attack cancer cells.

Targeted therapy interferes with specific cancer cell characteristics.

Common side effects include:

- Inflammation
- Skin changes
- Fatigue

- Nausea
  - Diarrhea
- ## SURGICAL SIDE EFFECTS

Breast cancer surgery may involve lumpectomy, mastectomy, or reconstruction.

Possible side effects include:

- Pain
  - Infection
  - Lymphedema
  - Seroma formation
  - Phantom breast pain
- ## WHEN TO CONTACT A HEALTHCARE PROVIDER

Patients should contact their healthcare team if they experience:

- Severe or worsening symptoms
  - Signs of infection
  - Unexpected physical or emotional changes
- ## DOCUMENT SCOPE

This document provides general information on treatment-related side effects.

It does not replace professional medical advice.