

[Home](#) › [About cancer](#) › [Breast cancer](#) › Survival for breast cancer

Survival for breast cancer

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in the UK. Survival for breast cancer is generally good, particularly if you are diagnosed early. This is probably because of screening, early diagnosis and improved treatment.

Survival depends on many different factors. So no one can tell you exactly how long you will live. It depends on your:

- type and stage of cancer
- level of fitness
- previous treatment

Your doctor can give you more information about your own outlook (prognosis). You can also talk about this with the Cancer Research UK information nurses on freephone 0808 800 4040, from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

Survival by stage

No UK-wide statistics are available for different stages of breast cancer. Survival statistics are available for each stage of breast cancer in England. These figures are for women diagnosed between 2016 and 2020.

Stage 1

Most women (almost 100%) will survive their cancer for 5 years or more after diagnosis.

Stage 2

90 out of 100 women (90%) will survive their cancer for 5 years or more after diagnosis.

Stage 3

More than 70 out of 100 women (more than 70%) will survive their cancer for 5 years or more after diagnosis.

Stage 4

More than 25 out of 100 women (more than 25%) will survive their cancer for 5 years or more after they are diagnosed. The cancer is not curable at this point, but may be controlled with treatment for some years.

You can view survival figures for Wales and Northern Ireland on our early diagnosis pages. Survival statistics for Scotland are not available.

[Go to our early diagnosis data hub to view survival statistics for Wales and Northern Ireland](#)

— Where this information comes from

Cancer survival in England, cancers diagnosed 2016 to 2020, followed up to 2021

NHS England

These figures are for people diagnosed in England between 2016 and 2020.

These statistics are for net survival. Net survival estimates the number of people who survive their cancer rather than calculating the number of people diagnosed with cancer who are still alive. In other words, it is the survival of cancer patients after taking into account that some people would have died from other causes if they had not had cancer.

Survival for all stages of breast cancer

Generally for women with breast cancer in England:

- Around 95 out of every 100 women (around 95%) survive their cancer for 1 year or more after diagnosis
- Around 85 out of every 100 women (around 85%) will survive their cancer for 5 years or more after diagnosis
- Around 75 out of every 100 women (around 75%) will survive their cancer for 10 years or more after diagnosis

— Where this information comes from

1 and 5 year survival statistics

Cancer survival in England, cancers diagnosed 2016 to 2020, followed up to 2021

NHS England

These figures are for people diagnosed in England between 2016 and 2020.

10 year survival statistics

Cancer survival by stage at diagnosis for England, 2019

Office for National Statistics

1, 5 and 10 year statistics are for net survival. Net survival estimates the number of people who survive their cancer rather than calculating the number of people diagnosed with cancer who are still alive. In other words, it is the survival of cancer patients after taking into account that some people would have died from other causes if they had not had cancer.

What affects survival

Your outlook depends on the stage of the cancer when it was diagnosed. This means how big it is and whether it has spread.

The type of cancer and grade of the cancer cells can also affect your survival. Grade means how abnormal the cells look under the microscope.

Your general health and fitness also affect survival, the fitter you are, the better you may be able to cope with your cancer and treatment.

Another factor that can affect survival is whether the cancer cells have receptors for particular cancer drugs.

About these statistics

The terms 1 year survival and 5 year survival don't mean that you will only live for 1 or 5 years.

The NHS, other health organisations, and researchers collect information. They watch what happens to people with cancer in the years after their diagnosis. 5 years is a common time point to measure survival. But some people live much longer than this.

5 year survival is the number of people who have not died from their cancer within 5 years after diagnosis.

Statistics are averages based on large numbers of patients. They can't predict exactly what will happen to you. No two patients are exactly alike and response to treatment also varies from one person to another.

More statistics

For more in depth information about breast cancer survival, go to our [Cancer Statistics section](#).

+ References

Cancer survival in England, cancers diagnosed 2016 to 2020, followed up to 2021

NHS England, February 2023

Cancer survival by stage at diagnosis for England, 2019

Office for National Statistics

AJCC Cancer Staging Manual (8th edition)

American Joint Committee on Cancer
Springer, 2017

Early and locally advanced breast cancer: diagnosis and management

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), 2018. Last updated April 2023

Primary invasive breast cancer

K Cascetta and A Tiersten
BMJ Best Practice, last updated January 2023

Advanced breast cancer: diagnosis and treatment

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), 2009. Last updated August 2017

Related links

What is breast cancer?

Breast cancer is cancer that starts in the breast tissue. Find out about who gets breast cancer and where it starts.

Getting diagnosed with breast cancer

You usually start by seeing your GP. Or you may have had changes picked up through breast screening. Find out about being referred to a breast clinic and the tests you might have.

Stages and grades of breast cancer

Get information about how doctors stage and grade breast cancer. In the UK, doctors use the TNM system to stage breast cancer. You may also be told about the number staging system.

Treatment for breast cancer

Treatment for breast cancer depends on a number of factors. Find out about breast cancer treatments, where and how you have them, and how to cope with possible side effects.

Living with breast cancer

Get practical, physical and emotional support to help you cope with a diagnosis of breast cancer, and life during and after treatment.

Breast cancer main page

Find out about breast cancer, including symptoms, diagnosis, treatment, survival, and how to cope with the effects on your life and relationships.



It's a worrying time for many people and we want to be there for you whenever - and wherever - you need us. Cancer Chat is our fully moderated forum where you can talk to others affected by cancer, share experiences, and get support. Cancer Chat is free to join and available 24 hours a day.

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Cancer Chat forum



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0808 800 4040

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