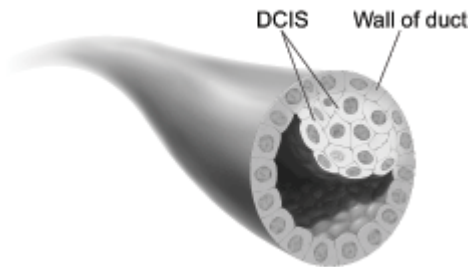


Staging

To plan your treatment, your doctor needs to know the extent (*stage*) of the disease. The stage is based on the size of the tumor and whether the cancer has spread. *Staging* may involve x-rays and lab tests. These tests can show whether the cancer has spread and, if so, to what parts of your body. When breast cancer spreads, cancer cells are often found in lymph nodes under the arm (*axillary lymph nodes*). The stage often is not known until after *surgery* to remove the tumor in your breast and the lymph nodes under your arm.

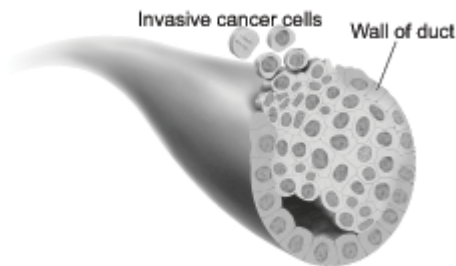
These are the stages of breast cancer:

- Stage 0 is *carcinoma in situ*.
 - ***Lobular carcinoma in situ*** (LCIS): Abnormal cells are in the lining of a lobule. (See picture of lobule on page 3.) LCIS seldom becomes *invasive cancer*. However, having LCIS in one breast increases the risk of cancer for both breasts.
 - ***Ductal carcinoma in situ*** (DCIS): Abnormal cells are in the lining of a duct. DCIS is also called *intraductal carcinoma*. The abnormal cells have not spread outside the duct. They have not invaded the nearby breast tissue. DCIS sometimes becomes invasive cancer if not treated.



This picture shows ductal carcinoma in situ.

- Stage I is an early stage of invasive breast cancer. The tumor is no more than 2 centimeters (three-quarters of an inch) across. Cancer cells have not spread beyond the breast.



This picture shows cancer cells spreading outside the duct. The cancer cells are invading nearby tissue inside the breast.

- Stage II is one of the following:
 - The tumor is no more than 2 centimeters (three-quarters of an inch) across. The cancer has spread to the lymph nodes under the arm.

- The tumor is between 2 and 5 centimeters (three-quarters of an inch to 2 inches). The cancer has not spread to the lymph nodes under the arm.
 - The tumor is between 2 and 5 centimeters (three-quarters of an inch to 2 inches). The cancer has spread to the lymph nodes under the arm
 - The tumor is larger than 5 centimeters (2 inches). The cancer has not spread to the lymph nodes under the arm.
- Stage III is *locally advanced cancer*. It is divided into Stage IIIA, IIIB, and IIIC.
 - Stage IIIA is one of the following:
 - The tumor is no more than 5 centimeters (2 inches) across. The cancer has spread to underarm lymph nodes that are attached to each other or to other structures. Or the cancer may have spread to lymph nodes behind the breastbone.
 - The tumor is more than 5 centimeters across. The cancer has spread to underarm lymph nodes that are either alone or attached to each other or to other structures. Or the cancer may have spread to lymph nodes behind the breastbone.
 - Stage IIIB is a tumor of any size that has grown into the chest wall or the skin of the breast. It may be associated with swelling of the breast or with nodules (lumps) in the breast skin.
 - The cancer may have spread to lymph nodes under the arm.
 - The cancer may have spread to underarm lymph nodes that are attached to each other or other structures. Or the cancer may have spread to lymph nodes behind the breastbone.
 - *Inflammatory breast cancer* is a rare type of breast cancer. The breast looks red and swollen because cancer cells block the lymph vessels in the skin of the breast. When a doctor diagnoses inflammatory breast cancer, it is at least Stage IIIB, but it could be more advanced.
 - Stage IIIC is a tumor of any size. It has spread in one of the following ways:
 - The cancer has spread to the lymph nodes behind the breastbone and under the arm.
 - The cancer has spread to the lymph nodes above or below the collarbone.
 - Stage IV is distant metastatic cancer. The cancer has spread to other parts of the body.
 - *Recurrent cancer* is cancer that has come back (recurred) after a period of time when it could not be detected. It may recur locally in the breast or chest wall. Or it may recur in any other part of the body, such as the bone, liver, or lungs.