

## A follow-up program?

It is important for you to receive regular check-ups after your breast cancer treatment ends. A follow-up program allows you to bring any concerns you have to the attention of a medical professional and may help find cancer early should it return.

- Your family doctor is a key person in your follow-up program. If you have new symptoms or concerns, first visit your family doctor, and he/she will give a referral if needed.
- Routine blood tests and x-rays, apart from an annual diagnostic mammogram, **are generally not required** if there is no clinical concern regarding a breast cancer recurrence.

## If you are participating in a special research study:

Your follow-up plan may be different: If so, your oncologist will discuss this with you.

## Additional Tests

The **BC Cancer Agency does not recommend tumour marker tests for people who are healthy after treatment.** If you develop any new symptoms or concerns, please tell your family doctor. Make sure to remind him/her of your past history of breast cancer.

## Treatment Summary

Cancer Stage: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Hormone Status: \_\_\_\_\_

HER-2 Status: \_\_\_\_\_

Treatment Received: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Hormone Therapy Plan: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Your follow-up program

Follow-up	Dates
Breast Self Examination (BSE)	Monthly
Family Doctor Visit	Every 6 months for 5 years then annually
Diagnostic Mammogram(s)	Annually starting 6 months after treatment ends
Bone Density Scan Only if taking an Aromatase Inhibitor (AI)	Prior to initiation of Aromatase Inhibitor & repeat in 24-36 months

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**BC Cancer Agency**  
CARE + RESEARCH  
*An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority*

# Follow-up Program

after breast cancer treatments



[www.bccancer.bc.ca](http://www.bccancer.bc.ca)

## You are part of a team!

Your team is made up of your oncologist, family doctor, pharmacist, and other health care providers.

You are also part of this team. You can take an active role in your care. Your program begins with:

- Monthly breast self-examination (BSE). BSE can help to detect changes in your breasts. It is the best way to know what is normal for you. If you find a change, visit your family doctor as soon as you can.

For more information on learning breast self-examination, ask your health care professional or family doctor.

## If you have had breast conserving surgery (lumpectomy):

- After your treatment ends, visit your family doctor every six months for the first five years. Your doctor will examine your breasts and the lymph node areas.
- Once a year (starting six months after your treatment ends), you should have a diagnostic mammogram of both breasts. This must be ordered by your doctor as you do not return to the Screening Mammography Program.
- After the fifth year, continue to visit your family doctor once a year for follow up, a clinical exam and to set up an annual mammogram.

## If you have had a mastectomy:

- After your treatment ends, visit your family doctor every six months for the first five years. Your doctor will examine your breast, the mastectomy scar, chest wall and lymph node areas.
- Once a year you should have a diagnostic mammogram of the remaining breast. This must be ordered by your doctor as you do not return to the Screening Mammography Program.
- After the fifth year, continue to visit your family doctor once a year for follow up, a clinical exam and to set up an annual diagnostic mammogram.

## If you have been put on hormone therapy:

For people with early stage breast cancer, hormone therapy is taken for at least five years. In some cases, hormone therapy may be prescribed for a longer time (up to 10 years). The treatment plan and duration should have been finalized prior to your discharge from the BCCA. Hormone therapy drugs are covered by the BC Cancer Agency.

- The BC Cancer Agency's regional cancer centres provide the first supply of this medication, during your last visit.
- For refills, your family doctor will write out a prescription to get the medication from either a BC Cancer Agency pharmacy or your local hospital pharmacy (not a retail pharmacy).

## Aromatase Inhibitors (AI)

If you are taking hormone therapies such as aromatase inhibitors (Anastrozole, Letrozole, Exemestane), you will need to have a bone density scan on a regular basis.

- A bone density scan is usually taken at baseline and then repeated in 2-3 years. Further bone scans are done depending on the results of the initial tests.
- Your family doctor should send you for a baseline lipid/cholesterol screen and may want to monitor your levels every 6-12 months if clinically indicated.
- A daily total of 1200mg of calcium and 1000 IU of vitamin D are recommended. This should come primarily from food and if needed, additional vitamin supplements (particularly the vitamin D).
- It is strongly recommended to include 150 minutes of aerobic exercise per week, and include weight bearing exercises (i.e. walking)