

The Risk of Cancer Coming Back After a HR+/HER2- Early Breast Cancer Diagnosis

Most people today diagnosed with breast cancer have early breast cancer (EBC), meaning the cancer remains localized in the breast, including stages I, II or III.¹



Hormone receptor-positive, human epidermal growth factor negative-2 (HR+/HER2-) is the **most common** subtype, accounting for **~70% of all breast cancers.**²

The fear of cancer returning after being declared in remission can be daunting. For many people, it is a priority in their adjuvant treatment plan to do everything they can to help minimize the risk of their cancer returning, **while still living their life to the fullest and being able to enjoy doing the things they love.**

For people who have been diagnosed and treated for EBC, **the risk of their breast cancer returning still exists.**³

EBC Key Terms to Know:



Recurrence:

Breast cancer comes back after initial treatment.



Remission:

No cancer cells are currently detectable in the body.



Adjuvant endocrine therapy:

A treatment that is used after primary treatment that helps reduce the risk of cancer coming back.

Reaching Remission Isn't the End of the Road

After completing initial cancer treatment, it is important to:

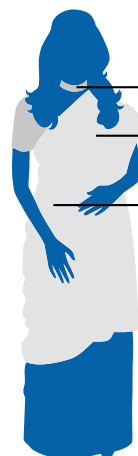
Have ongoing conversations with your health care provider about:

- Your specific risk of recurrence
- Ways to help minimize the risk of your cancer returning
- Pay attention to physical symptoms and report any changes to your health care provider

Maintain your emotional and mental health by:

- Talking with loved ones
- Joining support groups
- Practicing mindfulness techniques
- Openly communicating with your health care providers about how you are feeling

If your doctor recommends adjuvant therapy to reduce your risk of recurrence, talk to them about what to expect from treatment, including duration, as well as potential and actual side effects.



REGIONAL

Breast cancer recurrence can be local (cancer came back in the same breast), regional (cancer came back in nearby lymph nodes), or distant (cancer has spread to distant parts of the body and became metastatic).

LOCAL

DISTANT

Did You Know?

42% of early breast cancer is **diagnosed in stage II or III.**²

~90% of recurrences occurring after 5 years are **metastatic (or stage IV).**⁴



1 in 3 people with stage II EBC



More than **1 in 2** people with stage III EBC

will **experience distant recurrence**, even after receiving adjuvant endocrine therapy.³



Recurrence can happen in the short or long term, with more than **50% of patients** recurring **5+ years** after their diagnosis.⁵



A minority of patients with EBC are eligible for recently approved targeted treatments.²

Breast Cancer Myths Vs Facts

MYTH

FACT



If caught and treated early, breast cancer will not come back. Patients are “cured” after “ringing the bell.”

Breast cancer can return decades after initial diagnosis.³ People diagnosed with stage II or III EBC may be at risk of recurrence after reaching remission.³ Treatment options, like adjuvant therapy, may help reduce this risk.



Age 50 and under is too young for breast cancer.

Although breast cancer typically occurs in older women, breast cancer diagnoses in younger people are on the rise worldwide. In Europe, ~21% of breast cancer cases occur in women under age 50, and ~9% of new breast cancer diagnoses in the United States are found in women under 45.^{6,7,8} Additionally, certain groups like Black women in the United States are more likely to be diagnosed at a younger age compared to white women.⁹



Only women can get breast cancer.

While more prevalent in women, both men and women can be diagnosed with breast cancer.

After reaching remission, it is important to keep lines of communication open with your health care provider to **discuss ways to help remain cancer-free.**

Ways to Help Minimize Risk of Recurrence



Maintain a healthy lifestyle.



Continue taking your adjuvant treatment if one has been prescribed to you. Reach out to your health care provider or a patient navigator program to help manage any side effects.



Stay in close communication with your health care provider and share any challenges you're having “getting back to normal.”



Stay up-to-date on the latest developments in breast cancer and have proactive conversations with your health care provider about your specific risk of recurrence and the best treatment for you to prevent recurrence.

References

1. Iqbal J, Ginsburg O, Rochon P, Sun P, Narod SA. Differences in breast cancer stage at diagnosis and cancer-specific survival by race and ethnicity in the United States. *JAMA*. 2015;313(2):165-173. doi: 10.1001/jama.2014.17322
2. Howlader N, Altekruse S, Li CI, et al. US incidence of breast cancer subtypes defined by joint hormone receptor and HER2 status. *J Natl Cancer Inst*. 2014;106(5):dju055. doi: 10.1093/jnci/dju055
3. Pan H, Gray R, Braybrooke J, et al. 20-Year risks of breast-cancer recurrence after stopping endocrine therapy at 5 years. *N Engl J Med*. 2017;377(19):1836-1846. doi: 10.1056/NEJMoa1701830
4. Wangchinda P, Ithimakin S. Factors that predict recurrence later than 5 years after initial treatment in operable breast cancer. *World J Surg Oncol*. 2016;14(1):223. doi: 10.1186/s12957-016-0988-0
5. Gomis R, Gawrzak S. Tumor cell dormancy. *Mol Oncol*. 2017;11(1):62-78. doi: 10.1016/j.molonc.2016.09.009
6. di Martino E, Smith L, Bradley SH, et al. Incidence trends for twelve cancers in younger adults—a rapid review. *Br J Cancer*. 2022;126(10):1374-1386. doi: 10.1038/s41416-022-01704-x
7. Breast cancer facts. Europa Donna: European Breast Cancer Coalition. Accessed March 24, 2023. <https://www.europadonna.org/breast-cancer/>.
8. Breast cancer in young women. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Accessed March 24, 2023. https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/breast/young_women/bringyourbrave/breast_cancer_young_women/index.htm.
9. Yedjou CG, Sims JN, Miele L, et al. Health and racial disparity in breast cancer. *Adv Exp Med Biol*. 2019;1152:31–49. doi: 10.1007/978-3-030-20301-6_3

