When someone is diagnosed with breast cancer, their doctor determines its stage. Stages tell doctors different things about the cancer, like where it’s located or how much it has grown. Knowing the stage helps doctors figure out the right treatments.

**WHAT ARE BREAST CANCER STAGES?**

**STAGE 0: EARLIEST STAGE**

This is the earliest stage. The cancer cells have started growing in breast ducts or glands, but they haven’t spread to healthy breast tissue.

**STAGE 1: EARLY STAGE**

Cancer cells have spread to healthy breast tissue. They may or may not form a tumor. The cancer cells may also move to a few lymph nodes. These are small glands around your body that are part of your immune system.

**STAGE 2A: INTERMEDIATE STAGE**

Cancerous tumors at this stage are larger than in Stage I. Cancer cells might also be in several lymph nodes. The cells are attacking a larger area of healthy breast tissue than in Stage I.

**STAGE 2B: INTERMEDIATE STAGE**

At this stage, breast cancer is called “advanced.” Cancer cells might be in 10 or more lymph nodes. They can also be present in breast skin, the collarbone area or deep inside breast tissue.

**STAGE 3A: ADVANCED STAGE**

Cancer cells in Stage IV have metastasized. This means they’ve spread to other organs and areas of the body than where they started – often to bones, the liver, the brain or the lungs. Metastatic breast cancer can’t be cured, but treatments can relieve symptoms.

**TREATMENT TYPES**

- **LUMPECTOMY:** This surgery removes cancer cells when they’re grouped in one area of a breast.
- **MASTECTOMY:** This surgery removes the entire breast when cancer cells have spread throughout the breast tissue.
- **RADIATION THERAPY:** Doctors use strong, targeted X-rays or other types of energy to kill cancer cells.
- **HORMONE THERAPY:** Patients take medicines that stop their bodies from making certain hormones that tumors and some breast cancer cells use to grow.
- **CHEMOTHERAPY:** Patients take anti-cancer medications that kill cancer cells.

Doctors use different treatments depending on the breast cancer’s stage. People may need a combination of: