

Metastatic Breast Cancer MythBusters




A diagnosis of metastatic breast cancer can come as a shock, and learning you'll live with cancer for the rest of your life often raises more questions than answers. Because there is so much information available about early stage breast cancer, it may be difficult to know which facts also apply to metastatic breast cancer.

Below we dispel several **COMMON MYTHS** about metastatic breast cancer.




MYTH : Metastatic breast cancer is just a more advanced stage of breast cancer and each case is the same.

 **FACT** : Similar to early stage breast cancer, there are many types of metastatic breast cancer (MBC). MBC means the cancer has spread to other parts of the body outside the breast. Because there are many types of MBC and it can be present in many places, each diagnosis will differ in important ways including what treatment option(s) might work best.



MYTH : Those who have been diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer did not treat their early stage breast cancer aggressively enough, or chose the wrong initial treatment.

 **FACT** : Metastatic breast cancer, like other cancers, can be unpredictable, and occurs in up to 30% of patients who have previously received an early breast cancer diagnosis. This can occur from months to years after initial diagnosis. A diagnosis of MBC does not mean you did anything wrong when deciding on your course of treatment for your initial diagnosis. While all treatment options should be discussed with your physician, you should not blame yourself if the disease spreads or returns.



MYTH : Because it's an advanced form of breast cancer, MBC is extremely debilitating and has a very low survival rate.



FACT : While this is a type of cancer that you will live with for the rest of your life, through active management of the disease, many people are able to live full, productive lives.

MYTH : All cases of MBC are treated in the same way.



FACT : There is no one-size-fits all treatment for MBC; every patient and their disease is unique. Treatment choices are determined by cancer type, location and extent of the metastasis, hormone status, and other factors. Knowing your hormone status can help you better manage your MBC journey and determine what tests will need to be done, treatment options, and how your body may be affected.

MYTH : It is necessary to decide on a course of treatment for MBC immediately and stick with it throughout the full course of treatment.



FACT : Typically, there is a strong hormone component to metastatic breast cancer, which means the tumor can change over time. Because of this, it is important to work with your medical team to regularly evaluate your current treatment regimen to make the most informed decisions. There are a variety of available treatment options which may be given alone (monotherapy) or in combination, and may be considered to slow the spread of the disease and maintain an overall quality of life.

MYTH : The timeframe in which the disease will progress is similar for everyone living with metastatic breast cancer.



FACT : Metastatic breast cancer is not the same for everyone. Particularly because there is a strong hormone component to metastatic breast cancer, each person's illness experience will be different due to the level of hormones present in the body. A person's overall health status, genetics and other illnesses can also impact the MBC journey.

Talk to your doctor and learn more about metastatic breast cancer and how to actively manage your MBC journey at LifeBeyondPink.com.

“I think we have a visual picture of what early breast cancer looks like, and a face of metastatic breast cancer can look so different. It's all ages. It can be an older woman, a younger woman, and even men get metastatic breast cancer.”

— Judy,
living with MBC
for four years

“... it's not a death sentence for everyone. There are plenty of women with metastatic breast cancer living productive lives. It's important to realize that, keep your hope and not give up.”

— Lynn,
living with MBC
for two years