



BEYOND PINK: SHARING OUR  
**METASTATIC  
BREAST CANCER**  
*Story*

# **10 THINGS**

## **YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT METASTATIC BREAST CANCER**

### **Choosing Your Medical Team**

Being diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer can come as a shock and be frightening, and often results in many questions ranging from “How does MBC differ from other stages of breast cancer?” to “How will I manage a cancer I will have for the rest of my life?”

Ultimately, your medical team is the best resource to help manage the disease, so it’s important to understand which health care professionals (HCPs) you should consider to be a part of your team.

## BELOW ARE **10 THINGS** YOU SHOULD KNOW WHEN CHOOSING YOUR TREATMENT TEAM TO HELP MANAGE YOUR METASTATIC BREAST CANCER.

1

The first step is to **understand who should be on your team**. Utilize all resources available to you, such as your primary care physician (PCP), local cancer center, advocacy groups, oncologist directory (AMA, ASCO) or medical insurance carrier, to find the right experts to support your journey.

2

**An effective treatment team includes a variety of professionals.** Specialists and HCP's you should consider including on your medical team include a medical oncologist, PCP, nutritionist, mental health professional, physical therapist, pharmacist, surgeon, radiologist and an oncology nurse practitioner.

3

**Your medical oncologist will be responsible for your care and treatment.** Consider choosing someone who specializes in breast cancer and has expertise in treating women with metastatic disease.

4

**Do your research on potential providers** to ensure you are comfortable with their experience and style. Talk with others who have been treated by these doctors, ask for recommendations and research their background and areas of expertise through online searches and professional society recommendations (e.g., National Consortium of Breast Centers).

5

**Consider choosing members of an established breast center** that is part of the National Cancer Institute (NCI). This can help to streamline your care as they offer many services “under the same roof” including: seminars or workshops by a counselor or nurse that teach strategies to empower patients to actively manage their care, patient and family education (e.g., informational materials, support groups, counseling), testing and analysis services, urgent care needs and emotional support.

6

**Identify a primary point of contact**, which could be your medical oncologist, a nurse practitioner or patient navigator. This person will work closely with you to help ensure everyone on your team has the same information about your treatment and is aware of your needs.

7

**Build a relationship with your team.** Good communication between you and your team is essential to having your needs met to your satisfaction. Share how you want to receive information and ask questions. Also, learn how your team is communicating with each other to ensure you feel confident that you are receiving the best possible care.

8

**Actively participate in your treatment discussions** and learn as much as you can about MBC. If you don't understand what your doctor is telling you, ask questions until you do.

9

**Talk openly with your medical team about how your current course of treatment may be affecting you and how you are feeling.** This will help determine if you need any additional tests or if changes need to be made to your current course of treatment.

10

**Talk to others going through similar journeys.** Sharing your experiences and getting advice from others living with the disease can help you better manage your MBC experience, including personal experience with doctors, advice on how to discuss uncomfortable topics and where to find information about the disease.

*“Ask your doctor enough questions until you feel comfortable he/she is giving you the information you need.”*

—Karon,  
living  
with MBC  
since 2013