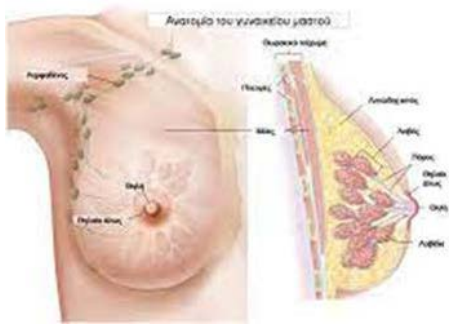


Breast cancer (BC)



Breast cancer (BC) is the most common cancer in women and the 2nd leading cause of cancer-related death after lung cancer. It is known that one in 8 women will develop BC during their lifetime. BC is curable in a large proportion of patients if diagnosed at an early stage. The most important risk factors for the development of BC are age, a positive family history, a positive personal history of BC, obesity, alcohol consumption and the presence of known mutations in hereditary genes associated with BC. Every woman should undergo a screening mammogram starting at the age of 40. Breast ultrasound offers additional information in patients with dense breasts.

Symptoms of BC include a palpable mass in the breast, skin thickening and nipple retraction. When a woman has symptoms, she should undergo a diagnostic mammogram, breast ultrasound, and breast Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI). Diagnosis is made by tissue biopsy of the suspicious lesion, which also determines the subtype of BC. BC is extremely heterogeneous in terms of prognosis and treatment and is divided into hormone-dependent, which has hormone receptors, HER2-positive, which contains cells with multiple copies of the HER2 gene, and triple-negative, which is negative for the aforementioned markers. Triple-negative BC is more aggressive and more common in younger patients.

Each subtype requires different treatment, and treatment depends largely on the stage of the disease. Every woman with operable disease should undergo a biopsy of the underlying lesion, as treatment is different for each subtype. For example, women with triple-negative or HER2-positive BC and tumors > 2 cm or palpable lymph nodes should undergo preoperative chemotherapy +/- immunotherapy (for triple-negative BC) or +/- targeted therapy (for HER2-positive cancers).

For metastatic BC, there are a variety of treatments available, depending on the subtype of BC.

At our hospital there is a team of specialist BC surgeons, as well as a team of radiation and medical oncologists.

In addition, our department participates in clinical trials for early and metastatic BC.