

Other Advances in Breast Cancer

New studies on breast cancer recurrence look at radiation therapy techniques, drugs that may interfere with tamoxifen (Nolvadex), and the removal of lymph nodes (tiny, bean-shaped organs that help fight infection). These studies include:

- A study showed that partial breast irradiation may be as effective as standard radiation therapy for early-stage breast cancer. Partial breast irradiation is targeted only to the tumor whereas standard radiation therapy is given to the entire breast. There was no difference in survival for women who received partial breast irradiation when compared with women who received standard radiation therapy. However, women who received partial breast irradiation were twice as likely to have the cancer come back in the same breast and 3 times more likely to develop cancer in the underarm lymph nodes.
- Two studies looked at how certain antidepressants affect the ability of tamoxifen to reduce the risk of breast cancer recurrence, showing conflicting results. The antidepressants, fluoxetine (Prozac) and paroxetine (Paxil) are types of drugs called 2D6 inhibitors and are often used to treat hot flashes caused by tamoxifen. One study showed that women taking 2D6 inhibitors are more likely to have a breast cancer recurrence. The other study showed that these types of drugs do not affect breast cancer recurrence.
- Another study showed that women with early-stage breast cancer with micrometastases (areas of cancer spread between 0.2 and 2.0 millimeters) on the sentinel (first) lymph node and who do not have all of the underarm lymph nodes removed have a higher risk of recurrence. The women with micrometastases who did not have surgery to remove all the underarm lymph nodes were almost five times more likely to have a recurrence than women who received the surgery.

Talk with your doctor for more information on the benefits and risks of the treatments discussed above, including additional treatment options and any screening you may need to watch for cancer recurrence.

For More Information

[Cancer.Net Guide to Breast Cancer](#) [1]

[Chemoprevention](#) [2]

[Understanding Radiation Therapy](#) [3]

[What to Know: ASCO's Guideline on Sentinel Lymph Node Biopsy in Early Stage Breast Cancer](#) [4]

Links:

[1] <http://www.cancer.net/patient/Cancer+Types/Breast+Cancer>

[2] <http://www.cancer.net/patient/All+About+Cancer/Risk+Factors+and+Prevention/Chemoprevention>

[3] <http://www.cancer.net/patient/All+About+Cancer/Cancer.Net+Feature+Articles/Treatments%2C+Tests%2C+and+Procedures/Understanding+Radiation+Therapy>

[4] <http://www.cancer.net/patient/Publications+and+Resources/What+to+Know%3A+ASCO%27s+Guidelines/What+to+Know%3A+ASCO%E2%80%99s+Guideline+on+Sentinel+Lymph+Node+Biopsy+for+Early+Stage+Breast+Cancer>