

Breast Cancer Stage 3 Facts

Almost 75% women worldwide in the age group of 25–50 years are affected by this disease. In other words, breast cancer is one of the most common cancers found in women across the globe. This disease also serves the second cause of women deaths because of cancer.

Stages of breast cancer are known to all of us. Staging refers to a classification that physicians make to categorize breast cancer based on the location and size of the tumor in the cancer. Once the stage of the breast cancer is identified from stage 1 to stage 4, proper treatment options are given to the patient to cure the disease.

Stage 3 breast cancer is further classified into three categories: Stage 3A, Stage 3B and Stage 3C. This sub-classification is based on a further combination of the tumor size and the lymph nodes in the nearby areas. Stage 3A breast cancer is based on any of the following specifications: there could be no tumor in the breast region, but there could be lymph nodes in the armpit region that contain cancer cells that stick together to other regions in the armpit. However, these may not be spreading in the breast region, but still need to be treated. Or, the size of the tumor is 5cm or less than that and cancer cells are identified in the armpit regions that stick together or to other structures in the region. Or the third possibility being that the size of the tumor is 5cm or more than that and there are cancer cells identified in the armpit regions that stick together or to other structures in the region. But in all these three possibilities, the cancer cells from the armpit region are not seen progressing to other parts of the breast region.

In Stage 3B of breast cancer, there is a cancer tumor that sticks to the skin or the wall of the breast. The lymph nodes in the armpit region may not necessarily contain cancerous cells. Also, the tumor in the breast region does not spread further. Stage 3C of breast cancer is the most dangerous of the three stages in 3rd degree breast cancer. In 3C, the tumor resides in the breast region and its branches spread to the armpit region and the breast bone.

Based on the size of the tumor, the spread and the stage in which the breast cancer is, its proper treatment commences. If a patient suffers from Stage 3 breast cancer and if the size of the tumor is not big, the medical treatment comprises lumpectomy, which is followed by treatment through radiation. A radical mastectomy customized based on the stage of the patient is also preferred by some medical practitioners. If the size of the tumor is big and its branches are seen in areas under the armpit, chest bone and collar bone, the treatment starts by first reducing the tumor's size so that surgery can follow. This is followed by customized radical mastectomy.