Breast Health Program

Working together, for your health.

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA CANCER CENTER
Breast Health Program
The Breast Health Program at The University of Arizona Cancer Center offers patients a personalized approach to breast cancer, spanning every facet of treatment. The team is made up of nationally-renowned experts across numerous specialties, all working in symphony to ensure exceptional care.

As the only National Cancer Institute-designated comprehensive cancer center headquartered in Arizona, the scientists, nurses, radiologists, surgeons, geneticists and oncologists involved in this team are dedicated to the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of breast cancer.

Screening & Diagnostic Services

An essential piece of The Breast Health Program is the Breast Imaging Center, a team and location focused exclusively on diagnostics related to breast health. Here, fellowship-trained breast imaging specialists use state-of-the-art technology to detect, evaluate and diagnose breast cancer, using:

- Digital mammography (Certified Softer Mammogram Provider for maximum comfort)
- Both screenings and diagnostic exams
- Breast ultrasound
- Minimally invasive breast biopsy
- Breast MRI, CT, PET/CT (Available at affiliate University Medical Imaging)

Patient comfort is paramount for the specialists at the Breast Imaging Center. The team is sympathetic to the anxieties often associated with breast health and screenings, so all efforts are made to deliver results in a timely and accurate manner.

Treatment Options

The Breast Health Program team understands that every patient is unique, so treatment plans are tailored and personalized. Specialists, from radiologists and oncologists to reconstructive surgeons, gather weekly to carefully coordinate individual patient care.

Medical Oncology

Medical oncologists use research-proven treatment—sometimes alone, sometimes in conjunction with surgery—based on a patient’s individual needs as well as characteristics of each tumor.
Treatment options include:

- Oncotype DX testing (To determine if adjuvant chemotherapy is needed)
- Adjuvant chemotherapy (Paired with surgery to reduce risk of recurrence)
- Adjuvant hormonal therapy (Paired with surgery to reduce risk of recurrence)
- Neoadjuvant chemotherapy or hormone therapy (Used to reduce the size of a tumor preceding surgery)
- Clinical trials for patients in all stages of breast cancer, including relapse of disease after standard treatment. These may involve new and novel agents not currently available outside of a clinical trial. Clinical trials for high risk and adjuvant patients are also offered to help ease the side effects of therapy or prevent relapse.

**Surgical Oncology**

The prospect of breast surgery can be anxiety producing, but in the hands of our breast surgical oncologists, patients are reassured. Fellowship-trained breast surgeons coordinate complex treatment planning with all team members. Our breast surgeons work closely with their patients to identify a surgical option that provides for the best outcome taking personal concerns and preferences into consideration. Some options include:

- Oncoplastic surgical techniques for better outcomes
- Skin-sparing or nipple-sparing mastectomy
- Sentinel lymph node biopsy and selective axillary node dissection
- Immediate reconstruction in coordination with plastic surgeons
- Surgical treatment for high risk or BRCA mutation carriers

**Reconstructive Surgery**

- Our fellowship-trained plastic surgeons offer many advanced breast reconstruction options, which can help minimize the trauma associated with breast cancer surgery and allow patients to feel whole and gain psychological closure. Reconstructive surgeons work closely with patients to decide which option suits them best:
  - Reconstruction with DIEP flaps (Using skin and fat from abdomen, one of the few centers in Arizona offering this technique)
  - Fat grafting for complete or partial breast reconstruction
  - Reconstruction with pedicled TRAM flaps (Using skin, fat and muscles from patients’ abdomen)
  - Reconstruction with latissimus dorsi flaps (Using muscle and skin from patients’ back)
  - Breast implants with or without acellular dermal matrices
Radiation Oncology

Radiation therapy is often recommended as part of a comprehensive treatment plan. Treatment techniques are tailored to each patient’s unique needs, including:

- Cardiac avoidance with patient-controlled inspiratory-gating (Delivers radiation only when the heart is out of the radiation field)
- Short-course whole-breast radiotherapy (3-4 weeks)
- Intensity Modulated Radiation Therapy (Radiation dose is shaped to avoid critical organs)
- Accelerated Partial Breast Irradiation (One week course of radiation, targets just surgical cavity)
- Stereotactic Radiosurgery/Stereotactic Body Radiotherapy (Focused treatment targeting tumors in hard to reach places from multiple angles)

Supportive Care

The Supportive Care for Healing team works closely with the treatment team, offering strategies and tools to navigate the cancer journey while providing the necessary support to strengthen both resilience and coping. Specially trained physicians in psychiatry, pain and palliative care, survivorship and integrative medicine, are available for support and decision-making.

This team also includes a nurse, nutritionist, therapists and social workers who provide support for patients and their families in their fight against cancer. Some of the ways this much-needed aspect of care is provided include:

- Comprehensive support groups, including Seven Levels of Healing and Eye of the Hurricane
- Routine screenings for depression
- Individual and group support therapy for everything from coping techniques to family communication issues
- Financial counselors and social workers on staff to assist with disability eligibility, insurance issues or help with legal resources
- Clinical nutritionist on hand with tips for eating before, during and after cancer
- An entire calendar of touch therapies and movement classes
Breast Cancer Prevention Program

The High-Risk program offers evaluation for genetic cancer syndromes, genetic counseling and testing. Prevention and treatment options are offered in a multidisciplinary fashion by medical geneticists, medical and gynecologic oncologists, surgeons and genetic counselors.

High-Risk Patients May:

• Have a family history of breast, ovarian, colon, prostate or pancreatic cancers
• Have been diagnosed at younger than 50-years-old
• Have bilateral or multiple primary cancers in an individual
• Have male breast cancer

Research

The University of Arizona Cancer Center’s emphasis on bench-to-bedside research gives appropriate patients access to a variety of clinical trials designed to generate more effective therapies, improve patient quality of life and advance our understanding of breast cancer development and progression.

Through participation in clinical trials, patients have a unique opportunity to actively share in the quest to find a cure for breast cancer and expand our knowledge of breast disease and cancer development.

Being part of an academic medical center means the team behind the Breast Health Program constantly seeks out novel ideas and innovative approaches for patients.

Choosing the Right Team

Finding out you have breast cancer can be overwhelming. Suddenly there are several decisions that need to be made about your care, including choosing the right team of oncologists, surgeons and radiologists. Some important variables to consider:

• Does your oncologist, surgeon or radiologist specialize in breast cancer?
• Does the surgeon you’ve chosen offer a minimally invasive biopsy option?
• Does your practitioner discuss all treatment options and answer all your questions before choosing a treatment plan?
• Does your breast health team offer clinical trials?
• Does your surgeon offer immediate reconstruction and other advanced breast-surgery techniques?
• Does your breast cancer treatment team also offer supportive care such as nutritionists, therapists and social workers?
• Do your breast cancer practitioners have access to a multidisciplinary team of providers?
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