

2026 RESEARCH FAST FACTS

Immunotherapy



RESEARCH INVESTMENT AT A GLANCE: (1982-2026)

More than **\$67 million** in over **160** research grants and close to **20** clinical trials focused on immunotherapy 

ABOUT IMMUNOTHERAPY

[Immunotherapy](#) is a relatively new and promising area of breast cancer treatment that boosts the body's own immune system to recognize and fight cancer cells. It can be used alone for breast cancer treatment or given along with other treatments like chemotherapy or surgery. Many types of immunotherapy drugs are used to treat breast cancer, including monoclonal antibodies. Vaccines for breast cancer, which are a type of immunotherapy, are currently being developed and tested in clinical trials.

Learn more about emerging areas in breast cancer therapy [here](#). Learn more about participating in a breast cancer immunotherapy trial [here](#).

WHAT WE'RE INVESTIGATING



Testing a new antibody-drug conjugate (ADC) that targets two proteins on breast cancer cells, helping the body's own immune system recognize and attack HER2-positive breast cancer cells.



A Phase II clinical trial is testing a combination of neoadjuvant radiotherapy, immunotherapy, and chemotherapy to improve outcomes for lymph node-positive, triple negative breast cancer, or hormone receptor-positive, HER2-negative breast cancer.



Identifying the unique factors only produced by cancer cells, and how they can be used in new immunotherapies to help the body's own immune system kill breast cancer cells.

“The treatment options today are what make treatment better than it was 12 years ago when I started. Options are hope. Options are futures.”

Komen Advocate in Science Peggy Johnson speaking on immunotherapy for treatment of triple negative breast cancer on Komen's Breast Cancer Breakthroughs series. Read more [here](#).

SPOTLIGHT



Komen Scholar Dr. Sara Tolaney is using her Komen Leadership Grant to test whether combination therapy with an antibody drug conjugate and immunotherapy could improve long-term survival for people with metastatic TNBC.

WHAT WE'VE LEARNED FROM KOMEN-FUNDED RESEARCH

- A pre-clinical study showed that a new engineered antibody-toxin conjugate (ATC), which delivers toxins directly to cancer cells while minimizing damage to healthy tissue, was effective in treating HER2-positive and triple negative breast cancer in the lab.
- A recently developed drug targeting a protein called [ALDH1A2](#) helps activate the body's own immune cells to fight cancer is a potential new treatment approach for breast cancer.
- A recent study reported that targeting the progesterone receptor in hormone receptor-positive breast cancers may help these breast cancers respond to immunotherapies.



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