

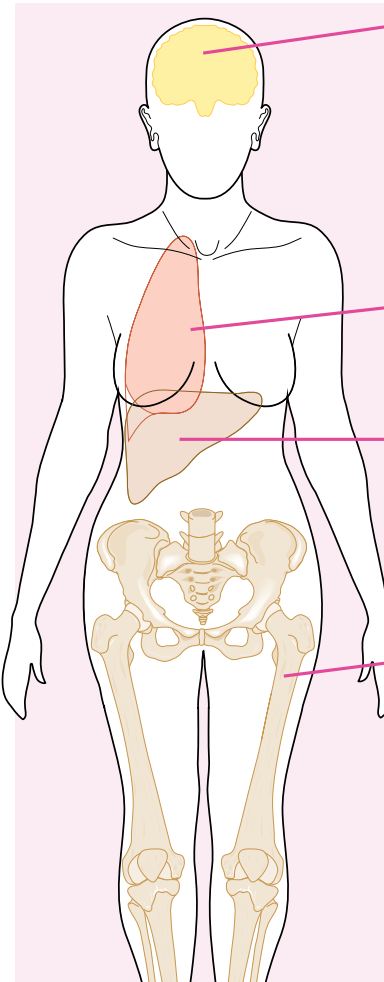
# After Early Breast Cancer – **SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF METASTATIC BREAST CANCER (MBC)**

## Metastatic Breast Cancer

After treatment for early or locally advanced breast cancer (stages I, II and III), it's possible for breast cancer to return (recur) and spread to other parts of the body (metastasize). This is called metastatic breast cancer (MBC). The most common sites for breast cancer to spread are the brain, lung, liver and/or bones. It's the most advanced stage of breast cancer, also known as stage IV breast cancer. The risk of MBC varies from person to person. Most people will not develop MBC, but it's important to be aware of the signs and symptoms.

## Signs and Symptoms

This picture below shows the most common signs and symptoms of MBC. If you've been treated for breast cancer and any of these signs or symptoms **persist for 2 weeks or longer** – tell your doctor. They may be related to other health conditions or side effects from treatment, but could be signs of recurrence.



**Brain**

- Attention or memory problems
- Blurred vision, dizziness or headaches
- Seizures
- Loss of balance
- Constant nausea or vomiting
- Confusion or personality changes

**Lung**

- Hoarseness or constant dry cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

**Liver**

- Itchy skin or rash
- Yellowing of skin or whites of eyes (jaundice)
- Pain or swelling in belly
- Digestive problems such as change in bowel habits or loss of appetite

**Bone**

- Bone, back, neck or joint pain
- Bone fractures
- Swelling

**Other signs and symptoms:**

- Fatigue
- Weight loss
- Difficulty urinating
- Increased lymph node size under arm or other places

**This information is important, but remember most people with these signs and symptoms will not have MBC.**

For more information, visit [komen.org](http://komen.org) or call Susan G. Komen's breast care helpline at 1-877 GO KOMEN (1-877-465-6636) Monday through Friday, 9 AM to 10 PM ET.

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## Resource:

**Susan G. Komen®**  
1-877 GO KOMEN  
(1-877-465-6636)  
[komen.org](http://komen.org)

## Related educational resources:

- [Follow-Up After Breast Cancer Treatment](#)
- [Life After Breast Cancer Treatment](#)
- [Talking with your Doctor](#)

## Questions to ask the doctor:

- [Chemotherapy and Side Effects](#)
- [Radiation Therapy and Side Effects](#)
- [Hormone Therapy and Side Effects](#)

After breast cancer treatment, see your doctor for regular follow-up visits to manage side effects of treatment. Discuss any signs of possible local recurrence or metastasis.

## Routine medical care after treatment for early breast cancer:

- Get a **mammogram** every 12 months. If you had a lumpectomy, have a mammogram 6 to 12 months after radiation therapy ends, then every 12 months.\*
- Get a **physical exam** 1-4 times a year (depending on your situation) for 5 years, then every 12 months.\* This is the time to discuss signs and symptoms of MBC or other concerns with your doctor.
- Get a **pelvic exam** every 12 months if you have not had your uterus removed.\*
- Get **bone density** tests every 1 to 2 years, depending on risk.\*
- Take **medications** as prescribed by your doctor.
- Maintain an **active lifestyle** and **healthy weight**.

\*Adapted from National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) and American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO).

**Note:** For those diagnosed with early breast cancer, blood and imaging tests (other than mammography) are not a standard part of follow-up care today.

## Need someone to talk to? **1-877 GO KOMEN (1-877-465-6636)**

Call the Susan G. Komen Breast Care Helpline to speak with a trained and caring specialist who can help you with:

- additional information about these signs and symptoms
- questions to ask your doctor about these signs and symptoms or other concerns
- psychosocial support

If you feel worried, anxious or depressed, tell your doctor. Your doctor may refer you to a support group or counselor.

The list of resources is only a suggested resource and is not a complete listing of breast health and breast cancer materials or information. The information contained herein is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or to replace the services of a medical professional. Komen does not endorse, recommend or make any warranties or representations regarding the accuracy, completeness, timeliness, quality or non-infringement of any of the materials, products or information provided by the organizations referenced herein.