

The stages of breast cancer

<p>Stage 1 or 2 breast cancer is often called early breast cancer.</p> <p>Stage 1 is divided into two stages.</p>	
Stage 1A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cancer (lump) is 2cm or smaller. It has not spread outside the breast.
Stage 1B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cancer is not found in the breast tissue or is 2cm or smaller. Tiny numbers of cancer cells (micrometastases) have spread to lymph nodes in the armpit.
<p>Stage 2 is divided into two stages.</p>	
Stage 2A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cancer cannot be found in the breast or the cancer is 2cm or smaller. It has also spread to 1 to 3 lymph nodes in the armpit or near the breast bone. <p>Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cancer is between 2cm and 5cm and has not spread to the lymph nodes in the armpit.
Stage 2B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cancer is between 2 and 5cm. It has spread to 1 to 3 lymph nodes in the armpit. <p>Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cancer is bigger than 5cm but has not spread to the lymph nodes.
<p>Stage 3 is divided into three stages. Stage 3 breast cancer is sometimes called locally advanced breast cancer. The cancer has spread to the lymph nodes, the skin of the breast or the chest muscle. The skin may be red, swollen or have broken down, causing an ulcer. Some breast cancers that have spread to the skin may be inflammatory breast cancer (see page 36).</p>	
Stage 3A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cancer cannot be found in the breast, or the cancer is 5cm or smaller. It has spread to 4 to 9 lymph nodes in the armpit. <p>Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cancer is bigger than 5cm. It is in up to 3 lymph nodes in the armpit or near the breast bone.
Stage 3B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cancer has spread into tissue nearby, such as the skin of the breast and the chest muscle underneath. It may have spread to 1 to 9 lymph nodes in the armpit.
Stage 3C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cancer has spread to 10 or more lymph nodes in the armpit. <p>Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cancer has spread to lymph nodes below the breast bone, above or below the collar bone and to 4 or more lymph nodes in the armpit.
<p>Stage 4 breast cancer is also called secondary or metastatic breast cancer. We have a booklet called Understanding secondary breast cancer (see page 146).</p>	
Stage 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cancer has spread to other parts of the body, such as the bones, liver or lungs.