

# OPTIONS IN MANAGING EARLY BREAST CANCER

## DIAGNOSIS

### Early breast cancer diagnosis

- Early breast cancer (EBC) is cancer localized to breast tissue and/or nearby lymph nodes<sup>1</sup>
- Diagnosis is verified via excision/biopsy of the tumor<sup>2</sup>

1. National Cancer Institute. *Dictionary of Cancer Terms*  
 2. National Cancer Institute. *Tumor Grade: Questions and Answers*

## NEO-ADJUVANT OR PRIMARY SYSTEMIC

### Primary systemic therapy to shrink the tumor prior to surgery

- Used in patients with large operable tumors to achieve breast-conserving surgery instead of mastectomy, or in those unsuitable for (immediate) surgery<sup>3</sup>
- + Chemotherapy is used most often<sup>3</sup>
- + Hormone (endocrine) therapy less frequently<sup>4</sup>

3. American Cancer Society. *Detailed Guide: Breast Cancer, Chemotherapy*  
 4. Breastcancer.org. *Timing of Hormonal Therapy with Other Treatments*

## SURGERY

### Removal of tumor and surrounding tissue

- Tumor(s) removed by lumpectomy or mastectomy<sup>5</sup>
- Can include removal of axillary lymph nodes<sup>6</sup>

5. Breastcancer.org. *Surgery*  
 6. Breastcancer.org. *Surgery*

## ADJUVANT

### Treatment given after surgery to help minimize risk of recurrence

- Radiation and/or chemotherapy are frequently used to improve local and systemic tumor control<sup>7</sup>
- This is usually followed by hormonal drug treatment in women with hormone-sensitive cancer<sup>7</sup>
- National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) guidelines recommend that aromatase inhibitors be part of the optimal adjuvant treatment of postmenopausal women with hormone-sensitive breast cancer<sup>8</sup>

7. National Cancer Institute. *Dictionary of Cancer Terms*  
 8. National Comprehensive Cancer Network. NCCN Task Force Report: *Adjuvant Therapy in Breast Cancer*

## EXTENDED ADJUVANT

### A treatment option after five years of tamoxifen

- The period following standard adjuvant tamoxifen therapy is called the extended adjuvant setting
- More than five years use of tamoxifen has not proven additional benefit<sup>9</sup>
- Approximately one-third of women with estrogen receptor-positive breast cancer experience a recurrence and over half of those recurrences occur more than five years after surgery, according to the Early Breast Cancer Trialists Group, Oxford, UK<sup>10</sup>
- The American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) technology assessment on adjuvant use of aromatase inhibitors, published in the January 2005 issue of the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*, recommends use of an aromatase inhibitor after treatment with tamoxifen for postmenopausal women with receptor-positive breast cancer<sup>11</sup>

9. Breastcancer.org. May 2002: *Medical Advances from ASCO*  
 10. Early Breast Cancer Trialists' Collaborative Group. *Treatment of Early Breast Cancer: Worldwide Evidence 1985-1990*  
 11. *Journal of Clinical Oncology*, January 20, 2005. American Society of Clinical Oncology Assessment on the Use of Aromatase Inhibitors As Adjuvant Therapy for Postmenopausal Women With Hormone Receptor-Positive Breast Cancer: Status Report 2004