

HOW IS PRIMARY BREAST CANCER TREATED?

Targeted therapy

**BREAST
CANCER
NOW** The research
& care charity

This information is for anyone who has primary breast cancer and wants to know more about how it is treated.

It is written by Breast Cancer Now, a charity that helps people who have breast cancer and other breast conditions.

You can also get Breast Cancer Now's longer free booklet **Treating primary breast cancer.**

WHAT IS IN THIS INFORMATION?

In this information is a simple summary of targeted therapy for breast cancer. Click on a question below to go straight to that section.

WHAT IS TARGETED THERAPY?

What is targeted therapy?

How will I know if targeted therapy will help me?

What are the side effects of targeted therapy?

TARGETED THERAPY

What is targeted therapy?

Targeted therapy is when drugs are used to try to block the growth and spread of breast cancer.

The drugs interfere with the way breast cancer cells grow.

Targeted therapy is also sometimes called biological therapy.

Not all breast cancers can be treated with targeted therapy.

The most widely used targeted therapy is a drug called trastuzumab.

Trastuzumab targets a protein in your body called HER2. This is because HER2 makes cancer cells grow.

TARGETED THERAPY

How will I know if targeted therapy will help me?

Targeted therapy drugs such as trastuzumab will help you if you have the sort of cancer that has high levels of HER2.

To find out if targeted therapy will help you, tests are done on a small part of the breast cancer.

The tests will show one of two things.

1. Your breast cancer has high levels of HER2, which means it is HER2 positive.

You will probably be offered trastuzumab to help treat your breast cancer.

2. Your breast cancer does not have high levels of HER2, which means it is HER2 negative.

You will not be offered trastuzumab as a treatment because it won't help treat your breast cancer.

SIDE EFFECTS

What are the side effects of targeted therapy?



The drugs used in targeted therapy can cause side effects. Some of the most common side effects are listed here.

- Shivering and feeling unwell
- Feeling or being sick
- Having diarrhoea

Always tell your breast care nurse or treatment team how your treatment is affecting you. They often have ideas about how to help make side effects easier to cope with.

INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

Where can I find out more about my treatments?

There are more simple summary slides about treating primary breast cancer. Find them by clicking on subject areas at this website page

[breastcancernow.org/primary treatment](https://breastcancernow.org/primary-treatment)

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Call our Helpline on **0808 800 6000**