

Word List

Abnormal cells: cells that do not look or act like the healthy cells of the body

Aggressive cancer cells: cells that are fast growing and can spread beyond the small area where they started

Anti-HER-2 antibody therapy: a medicine used to treat breast cancer that has abnormal HER-2 proteins

Aromatase inhibitor: medicine that lowers the levels of estrogen in the body (after menopause)

Axillary lymph nodes: lymph nodes under your arms that drain lymph from breast tissue

Biopsy: an operation to take out tissue to check if it is cancer or not

c-erb-2: another name for the HER-2 gene or protein

Clean margins: means that the normal tissue around the tumor is free of cancer cells

Close margins: means that cancer cells come near the outer edge of the tissue around the tumor

Colloid: a type of invasive cancer that grows into the normal tissue around it; it usually grows slowly

Comedo: a type of non-invasive cancer that usually does not spread; it tends to grow fast

Cribiform: a type of non-invasive cancer that does not spread and usually grows slowly

Ductal Carcinoma in situ (DCIS): a non-invasive cancer that stays inside the milk ducts (pipes) and usually doesn't spread

erb-2: another name for the HER-2 gene

ER-negative: a tumor that does not have estrogen receptors

ER-positive: a tumor that has estrogen receptors

FISH (Fluorescence In Situ Hybridization) test: one type of test for the HER-2 gene

Gene: part of the body's code for making new cells and controlling the growth and repair of the cells

Glands: This word has a few different meanings. It can be a group of cells or an organ that makes one or more substances used in the body, like sweat, milk, mucus, hormones, and growth factors. Other glands filter and remove substances from the blood or lymph fluid. Some people use the word "gland" to describe lymph nodes.

Grade: tells you how much the tumor cells look different from normal cells

HER-2: a gene that helps control the growth and repair of cells

Hormone receptors: tiny areas like ears on cells that listen and respond to signals from hormones

IHC (immunohistochemistry) test: one type of test for proteins, like ER and HER 2.

In situ: a cancer that stays inside the part of the breast where it started; it does not spread, but over time, in situ cancers can develop into invasive cancers

Invasive: a cancer that spreads beyond the place where it started

Invasive Ductal Carcinoma (IDC): a cancer that begins in the milk duct but grows into the normal breast tissue around it

Invasive Lobular Carcinoma (ILC): a cancer that starts inside the milk-making gland, but grows into the normal breast tissue around it

Irregular cells: cells that do not look like the healthy cells of the body

Ki-67: a test that shows how fast cancer is growing

Lobular Carcinoma in situ (LCIS): cancer that has cells that are not normal but that stay inside the milk-making part of the breast

Lymphatic invasion: means that cancer cells are found in the lymph vessels

Lymph nodes: filters along the lymph fluid channels; they try to catch and trap cancer cells before they reach other parts of the body

Margins: the normal tissue around the tumor that was taken out

Medullary: a type of invasive cancer that grows into the normal tissue around it

Milk ducts: tiny tubes in the breast through which milk flows to the nipple

Milk lobules: milk-making glands in the breast

Mucinous: a type of invasive cancer that spreads into the normal tissue around it

Negative margins: means that the tissue around the tumor is free of cancer cells

Non-invasive: a cancer that stays inside the breast part where it started

Papillary: a type of non-invasive cancer that does not spread and tends to grow slowly

Pathologist: a doctor who looks at tissue under a microscope to see if it's normal or affected by disease

Positive margins: means that cancer cells come up to the edge of the normal tissue around the tumor

Pre-cancerous: a tumor that is not considered a cancer; it is a warning sign that you may get cancer in the future

PR-negative: a tumor that does not have progesterone receptors

PR-positive: a tumor that has progesterone receptors

Recurrence: when a cancer comes back again

Solid: a type of cancer that is non-invasive; it does not spread and tends to grow slowly

S-phase fraction test: a test that shows how fast a cancer IS growing

Stage: a category used to describe the level of severity of breast cancer, based on the size of the tumor, the extent to which the tumor is involved with the skin, muscles, and other tissues next to it, and lymph node involvement.

Tamoxifen: medicine that stops estrogen from reaching hormone receptors on tumors

Tubular: a type of invasive cancer that grows into the normal tissue around it; it usually grows slowly

Vascular invasion: means that cancer cells are found in the blood vessels