
Lymphoma of the Breast

Lymphoma of the breast is a cancer that originates in the lymphatic tissues of the breast. The tumor is called a sarcoma (developing from connective tissues of the breast) and accounts for approximately 10 percent of all sarcomas. Most breast tumors are from epithelial cells (which line the ducts), called carcinomas. This type of cancer is very rare. Of all carcinomas and sarcomas, lymphoma occurring in the breast accounts for only 0.1 percent of breast cancers.

Lymphoma may occur first (primary) in the breast or move from another part of the body to the breast (secondary). Patients diagnosed with previous non-Hodgkin's lymphoma are subject to developing secondary breast tumors. Breast lymphomas occur in males as well as females.

The tumor is identified by a mass in the breast or, occasionally, several masses in the same breast and may be bilateral (occurs in both breasts). The mass is usually larger than most breast carcinomas and is softer in texture. The average size is approximately 40 mm (3/4 inches across).

Patients with lymphoma of the breast may also have accompanying symptoms of night sweats, weight loss and extreme fatigue, unlike breast carcinomas. Treatment varies according to the size of the mass, number of masses present in the breast and if the tumor is primary or secondary. Chemotherapy with or without radiation therapy may be prescribed. The combination of drugs used is different from carcinomas of the breast. The same drugs used to treat non-Hodgkin's lymphoma are used. Surgery may or may not be required.

Additional Information:
