

Where can I find support while I undergo treatment?

The purpose of the UK Charity for TNBC is to provide up to date information to patients with TNBC as well as their families and friends, using leaflets and our website www.ukcharityfortnbc.org. Also to raise funds for research into finding targeted treatments, and eventually a cure, for TNBC. We also aim to provide up to date information on our website, www.ukcharityfortnbc.org.

There are many other charities that also provide excellent support for patients, giving advice on a wide range of day to day coping strategies and where to find support for you, your family and friends. Here are some useful contacts:

macmillan.org.uk	maggies.org
cancerresearchuk.org	tnbcfoundation.org
breastcancer.org	TOUCHBBCA.org

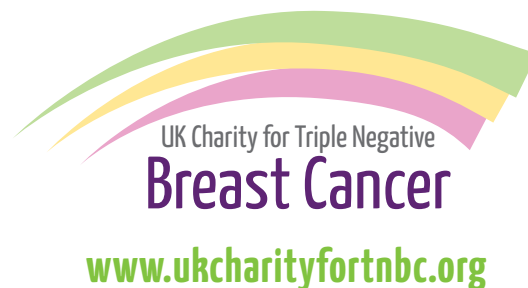
UK Charity for Triple Negative Breast Cancer

This leaflet was prepared by the UK Charity for Triple Negative Breast Cancer, UK registered charity no. 1192952.

There is much more information on the website ukcharityfortnbc.org covering:

- What is the UK Charity for TNBC?
- What is Triple Negative Breast Cancer and what does it mean for me?
- When you are first diagnosed with Triple Negative Breast Cancer
- Working towards a cure for people with Triple Negative Breast Cancer

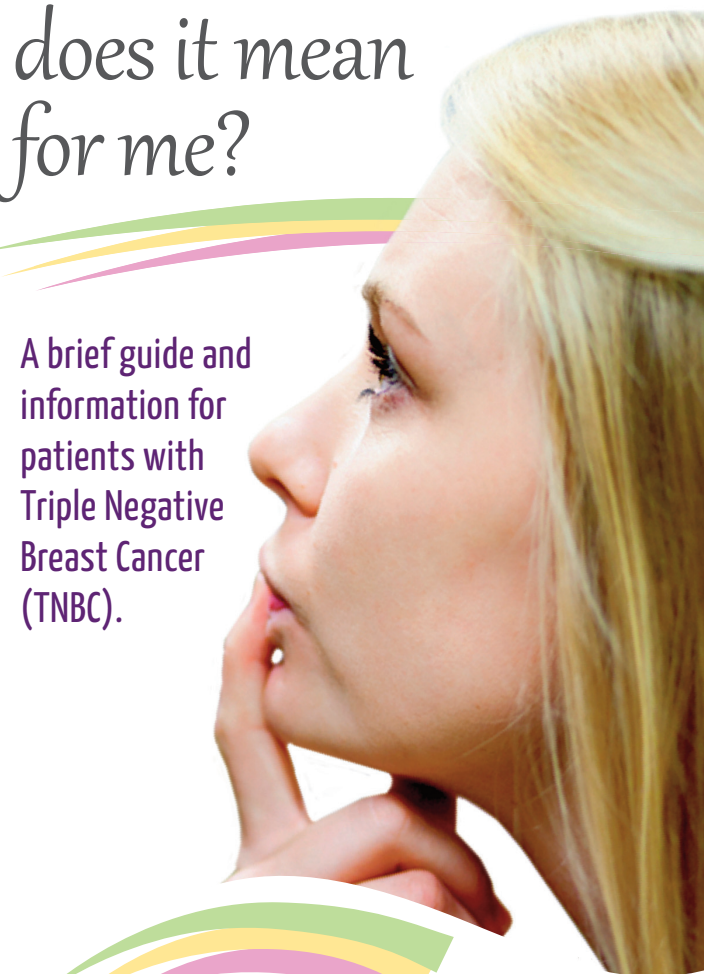
If you would like to donate to the charity you can do so on ukcharityfortnbc.org. This will enable us to provide more information to TNBC patients and carers, and invest in much needed scientific research.



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What is Triple Negative Breast Cancer and what does it mean for me?

A brief guide and information for patients with Triple Negative Breast Cancer (TNBC).



Understanding Triple Negative Breast Cancer



If a doctor has just told you that you have breast cancer and that it is 'triple negative breast cancer', your brain is probably spinning trying to understand and come to terms with what this means. Hearing new words like this from medical professionals can be overwhelming and alarming.

This leaflet is designed to explain to you and your family and friends what triple negative breast cancer is, how it is different to other forms of breast cancer and what this means for your treatment.

Please read this leaflet in your own time, when you are ready and at your own pace.

What is Triple Negative Breast Cancer?

You may be surprised to learn that not all breast cancers are the same; there are 4 main types and there are differences in how they behave and are treated.

You will probably have had a biopsy, where a small part of the breast lump is taken to a laboratory for testing. Here they will test for 'receptors', which are chemicals or proteins present on the surface of breast cancer cells. There are 3 types of receptors, oestrogen, progesterone and human epidermal growth.

Most breast cancers have one or more of these receptors but 1 in 6 breast cancers have none of these, so are 'negative' to all 3; hence they are said to be triple negative, often abbreviated to TNBC.

What does this mean for me?

Treatment of breast cancer can involve surgery, radiotherapy and anti-cancer drugs. All types of breast cancer are treated the same in terms of surgery and radiotherapy. In addition they can all be treated with chemotherapy, but not necessarily newer targeted anti-cancer drugs.

Over the last twenty years, doctors and scientists, often working with drug companies, have developed 'targeted' treatments for the 3 most common forms of breast cancer. For example, you may have heard of tamoxifen or herceptin. These drugs have helped reduce the number of people whose cancer comes back or spreads, so that more people with these commoner types make a full recovery.

Because there are not yet targeted drugs for TNBC and it can spread, it is sometimes called more 'aggressive'; nevertheless, chemotherapy does reduce the risk of the cancer coming back.

Are There Treatments for Triple Negative Breast Cancer?

Yes, there are and most women with TNBC can be cured if their cancer is caught early and treated without delay.

Your surgeon and oncologist (cancer doctor) will discuss with you what treatments are best for you and your particular cancer. Treatment usually involves a combination of surgery, radiotherapy and chemotherapy.

Surgery

Surgery is a 'local' therapy that deals with the cancer in your breast. However the cancer can throw off tiny seedlings or cells, that are too small to be detected. It is these seedlings, or metastasis, that can lead to a cancer coming back some time in the future.

Radiotherapy

This usually follows surgery and is also a local therapy which kills cancer cells in the breast which may have eluded surgery. It may also be applied under your arm if the surgeon found cancer in the 'lymph nodes', which is the pathway that cancer cells can use to enter the body.

Radiotherapy is a beam of radiation given from outside your body, probably daily for a few weeks.

Chemotherapy

Chemotherapy is usually given as a drip into a vein, but can sometimes be taken by mouth. The anti cancer drugs travel in your blood and reach all parts of the body. That is why it is called a 'systemic' treatment.

Chemotherapy anti cancer drugs are given with the aim of getting rid of cancer seedlings that have started to spread, reducing the risk of cancer coming back in the future. Depending on individual circumstances, chemotherapy may be given before or after surgery and/or radiotherapy; sometimes, chemotherapy is recommended both before and after local treatment.

There are many ways to treat TNBC, and many ways forward, so don't feel 'negative'!