Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Lobular Carcinoma in Situ (LCIS)

This information will help you understand what lobular carcinoma in situ (LCIS) is, and how it can affect your risk of getting breast cancer. It also explains what you can do to prevent breast cancer.

About LCIS

LCIS is a condition where there is an overgrowth of cells in the ducts or lobules. Ducts are small tubes that carry the breast milk to your nipples. Lobules are small round sacs that make breast milk.

LCIS isn't breast cancer, but it can raise your risk of getting breast cancer. Healthcare providers can find out if you have LCIS by doing a breast biopsy (taking a small sample of tissue). If your biopsy shows you have LCIS, your risk of getting breast cancer may be slightly higher than the average person.

Breast Cancer Screening

People with LCIS should have regular breast exams and breast imaging because of their higher breast cancer risk. You and your healthcare provider will decide what type of breast imaging is best for you, based on your personal history. MSK recommends you have a physical exam with a breast specialist every 6 to 12 months. You should also haves breast imaging every year.

Lowering Your Breast Cancer Risk

Medications

Taking certain medications can help lower your risk of getting breast cancer. Studies show that the following medications may lower your risk of breast cancer by more than half. Talk with your healthcare provider about starting

medication so you can discuss what's best for you.

Tamoxifen and raloxifene

Tamoxifen (Nolvadex®, Soltamox®) and raloxifene (Evista®) are medications that lower your risk for breast cancer. They block the effects of estrogen, which can make some breast tumors grow. Estrogen is a natural hormone your body makes. These medications only lower your risk of getting a certain type of breast cancer. It's called estrogen receptor-positive breast cancer, the most common type of breast cancer. They will not lower your risk of getting estrogen receptor-negative cancers.

You can only take raloxifene if you have gone through menopause (permanent end of your menstrual cycle). You can take tamoxifen before or after menopause.

Aromatase inhibitors

Aromatase inhibitors are medications that stop an enzyme called aromatase from changing other hormones into estrogen. One of these medications, exemestane (Aromasin®), has been shown to lower the risk of breast cancer in people with LCIS. You should only take these medications if you have gone through menopause.

Prophylactic mastectomy

Some people may choose to have their breasts removed to prevent breast cancer. This is called a bilateral prophylactic (PRO-fih-LAK-tik) mastectomy. This surgery is sometimes used to lower the risk of breast cancer in people with LCIS.

Lifestyle changes

There are also lifestyle changes you can make to lower your breast cancer risk if you have LCIS. You can discuss these lifestyle changes with your healthcare provider.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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