



## PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Common Questions About the Oncotype DX® Test

This information answers common questions about the Oncotype DX test.

## What is the Oncotype DX test?

The Oncotype DX is a test that looks at genes in breast cancer tissue. It may predict:

- Breast cancer prognosis (prog-NO-sis). Prognosis is the chance of the cancer coming back. If cancer comes back, it's called recurrence (ree-KER-ents).
- If having chemotherapy (chemo) along with hormone therapy will lower the chance of cancer recurrence.

Your test results can help you and your doctors make the right treatment plan for you.

## What type of cancer is the Oncotype DX test used for?

The Oncotype DX test can be done on early-stage (stage 1 or 2) breast cancers that are estrogen-receptor positive

and HER2 negative.

Estrogen-receptor positive cancers are cancers that have receptors for estrogen. HER2 negative cancers are cancers that don't have large amounts of the human epidermal growth factor protein.

## **When should I have the Oncotype DX test?**

You should have the Oncotype DX test when you and your doctor agree the results will be helpful. For some people, the results are helpful for making decisions about chemo treatment. For others, the results are not helpful.

## **How is the Oncotype DX test done?**

The Oncotype DX test is done using cancer tissue your surgeon took out during your surgery. We'll send the tissue to a special lab for the test.

The Oncotype DX test looks at a group of 21 genes in the cancer tissue. It assigns a recurrence score based on what it finds.

## **What is a recurrence score?**

The results of the Oncotype DX test are given as a recurrence score. The recurrence score predicts the chance of the cancer coming back.

Your results will include a recurrence score from 0 to 100. A low recurrence score is 25 or lower. A high recurrence score is 26 or higher.

### **If you have a low recurrence score (0 to 25)**

- The chance the cancer will come back is low. This does not mean the cancer will definitely not come back.
- The benefits of chemo may not be worth the side effects for you. We may still recommend chemo for some young people with recurrence scores 25 or lower.

### **If you have a high recurrence score (26 to 100)**

- The chance the cancer will come back is higher. This does not mean the cancer will definitely come back.
- Adding chemo to your cancer treatment may lower your risk of the cancer coming back.

## **How long will it take to get my Oncotype DX test results?**

It will take about 2 weeks for your doctor to get your test results. Once your doctor gets your results, they will talk with you about what they mean.

If you have an appointment scheduled, they will talk with you about your results during your appointment. If you do not have an appointment scheduled, they may call you to

share your results.

## **Is the Oncotype DX test covered by insurance?**

Most insurance companies cover the Oncotype DX test. The company that runs the test will contact your insurance company for approval.

## **If I don't need chemo, do I still need hormone therapy?**

Talk with your doctor about the best treatment plan for you. If your cancer cells are estrogen-receptor positive, they may recommend hormone therapy even if you don't need chemo.

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](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

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