

# What is the Oncotype DX test?

# What is the Oncotype DX test?

## Information for women diagnosed with early-stage breast cancer

### What is the Oncotype DX test?

The Oncotype DX test measures several cancer genes in breast tumour tissue. The test shows whether you may benefit from chemotherapy - treatment with drugs to destroy or slow the growth of cancer cells.

### Is the Oncotype DX test right for me?

The Oncotype DX test may be right for you if you are being considered for chemotherapy treatment after your surgery, and you are newly diagnosed with an early-stage invasive breast cancer that did not involve nearby lymph nodes, cancers that are:

- Stages I-II, early stage cancers.
- Node negative cancers are cancers that do not involve the lymph nodes.
- Endocrine receptor positive tumours (ER+). ER+ tumour cells may respond to hormonal therapy.
- Human epidermal growth factor receptor negative (HER2-). HER2 is a protein that appears in the cancer cells of some women with breast cancer. A woman whose tumour has normal levels of HER2 is HER2 -.

### Planning Your Treatment

The first step in treating breast cancer is usually surgery to remove the tumour. Following surgery, your Surgeon will refer you to a Medical Oncologist to discuss other treatment options, such as hormonal therapy and chemotherapy.

**What are your questions? Please ask.  
We are here to help you.**

Your Medical Oncologist will consider many factors in planning your treatment, including:

- your medical history, age and overall health.
- the size and grade of your tumour and whether your tumour has spread elsewhere.
- whether there are endocrine receptors and HER2 receptors on the cells of your tumour.
- your treatment preferences.

The Oncotype DX test can help you and your Medical Oncologist decide if you could benefit from chemotherapy.

### **How will the Oncotype DX test help with my treatment plan?**

If you meet the eligibility criteria, your Medical Oncologist will order and receive the results of your Oncotype DX test. The report includes your personal recurrence score<sup>®</sup>, a number between 0 and 100.

- Women with lower recurrence scores have a lower risk that their cancer may come back and are less likely to benefit from chemotherapy.
- Women with higher recurrence scores have a greater chance that their breast cancer may come back and are more likely to benefit from chemotherapy.

The Oncotype DX test also provides information about the activity levels of the estrogen and progesterone receptors in your tumour, which may help guide your treatment. Estrogen receptor positive (ER+) and progesterone receptor positive (PR+) refer to breast cancer cells that may respond to hormone therapy.

It is important to understand that a lower recurrence score result does not mean that there is no chance that a woman's breast cancer will return. Also, a higher recurrence score result does not mean that a woman's breast cancer will definitely return.

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

The test is done on a small amount of your tumour tissue that was removed during your original surgery (lumpectomy, mastectomy or core biopsy). This tissue is stored at the hospital where you had your surgery. You do not need to have more surgery for the Oncotype DX test.

When your Medical Oncologist orders the Oncotype DX test, the hospital will send a sample of your tissue to Genomic Health®, the lab that does the Oncotype DX test.

## **When should the Oncotype DX Test be done?**

If you meet the eligibility criteria, your Medical Oncologist will order the Oncotype DX test after your first appointment and before you start chemotherapy and/or endocrine therapy.

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

Oncotype DX test results are usually available within 2 weeks. The results are sent to your Medical Oncologist so they can discuss the results with you.

## **Who pays for the Oncotype DX Test?**

The Nova Scotia Department of Health & Wellness pays for OncoDX test for women who meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Stages I-II node-negative breast cancers.
- Tumours that are ER+ and HER2 -.
- High-risk features based on tumour size, grade and lympho-vascular invasion.
- The patient and Medical Oncologist are considering chemotherapy treatment and need the Oncotype DX results to make the final decision.

## **Where can I learn more about the Oncotype DX Test?**

To learn more about the Oncotype DX test, speak with your Medical Oncologist or visit <http://breast-cancer.oncotypedx.com/en-CA/Patient-Invasive>.



**Looking for more health information?**

Find this brochure and all our patient resources here: <http://library.nshealth.ca/PatientGuides>  
Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.  
For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

*Nova Scotia Health Authority promotes a smoke-free, vape-free, and scent-free environment.  
Please do not use perfumed products. Thank you!*

**Nova Scotia Health Authority**  
[www.nshealth.ca](http://www.nshealth.ca)

*Prepared by: Nova Scotia Cancer Care Program  
Approved by: NSCCP Patient Education Committee  
Designed by: Nova Scotia Cancer Care Program Staff*

The information in this brochure is for informational and educational purposes only.  
The information is not intended to be and does not constitute health care or medical advice.  
If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider. The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.

NSCCP-0037 Updated March 2018 ©Nova Scotia Health Authority