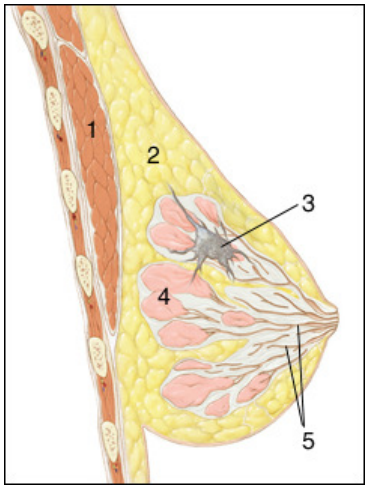

Breast Cancer Information

1. Pectoralis Muscle, 2. Fatty Breast Tissue, 3. Breast Cancer, 4. Breast Glands (lobules), 5. Milk Ducts

Stage: How far has the cancer spread based on three things referred to as T,N,M.

T (tumor size) T1 = 2cm, T2 = 2-5 cm T3 = larger, T4 = more advanced
N (node involvement) N0 = no nodes, N1 =1-3 involved, N2= 4-9. N3= 10
M (metastases) any spread to bone, liver, brain

Stage 0 = Tis = ductal carcinoma in situ
Stage I = T1N0; IIA = T1N1 or T2N0; IIB = T2N1 or T3N0
Stage IIIA = T3 or N2; Stage IIIB = T4; Stage IIIC = N3, Stage IV = metastases

Histology – appearance of the cells under the microscope. Most cancers arise from milk duct cells and are called invasive ductal carcinoma. (The earliest form, before any invasion is called ductal carcinoma in situ or DCIS.) Other types include lobular and medullary and very favorable types like tubular or mucinous.

Grade – how mutated the cells have become. The closer the cells resemble normal breast cells, the less serious (slower growing, less likely to spread.)
Grade 1 or well differentiated – slow growing, most favorable
Grade 2 or moderately differentiated – most common, average
Grade 3 or poorly differentiated – fast growing, more serious

Hormone Receptors – normal breast cells are sensitive to hormones and have positive receptors for estrogen (ERP+) or progesterone (PRA+) If the hormone receptors are present (called positive) the cancer is less serious and more likely to respond to a hormone therapy drug like tamoxifen (Nolvadex) , Arimidex (anastrazole) , Femara (letrozole) or Aromasin (exemestine)

DNA Studies: the more mutated the cells, the more serious. If there is an abnormal number of chromosomes (aneuploid), rapidly dividing numbers of cells (high S-phase) or abnormal genes (HER-2/Neu), this may effect the choice of chemotherapy drugs used (like Adriamycin, Taxol or Herceptin.)

Your tumor was _____ cm with _____nodes; so the stage was _____
The histology type was _____ the hormone receptor status_____
and the DNA status was _____

more information go to web sites: www.aboutcancer.com or www.wellspringoncology.org