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**Patient
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Network**

RESTORE: Medication Management

Resource Guide on Managing Taking Many Medicines at Once & Stage IV Breast Cancer





What Does it Mean to Take Multiple Medications with Stage IV Breast Cancer?

Many women with Stage IV breast cancer - also known as metastatic breast cancer (mBC) - take several medicines at the same time. This can include cancer treatments, pain pills, and medicines for other health problems like high blood pressure or diabetes. Medicines are important for your health. But taking many at once can sometimes cause side effects, bad reactions, or confusion.

Tips for Multiple Medications:



Keep an Updated Medication List:

Write down every pill, liquid, or shot you take. Include vitamins, herbs, and medicines you buy without a prescription. Bring your list to every doctor visit.



Ask Questions About Every Prescription:

Have your doctor explain each of your medications. Ask questions like: Why do I need this medicine? How long will I take it? What side effects should I look out for? How does it work with my cancer treatment?



Use One Pharmacy When Possible:

Try to get all your medicines from the same place. This helps the pharmacist check for problems between drugs.



Speak Up and Advocate for Yourself:

If a medicine makes you feel worse, say so. Ask if the dose can change, if you can take it at a different time, or if another medicine might work better.



Organize Your Medications:

Use a pill box, chart, or phone alarm. This helps you remember when to take each dose. Ask a family member or friend to help if it feels like too much.



Schedule Regular Reviews:

Ask your doctor to look at all your medicines at least once a year, or sooner if you feel sick. Sometimes medicines you once needed can be stopped safely.

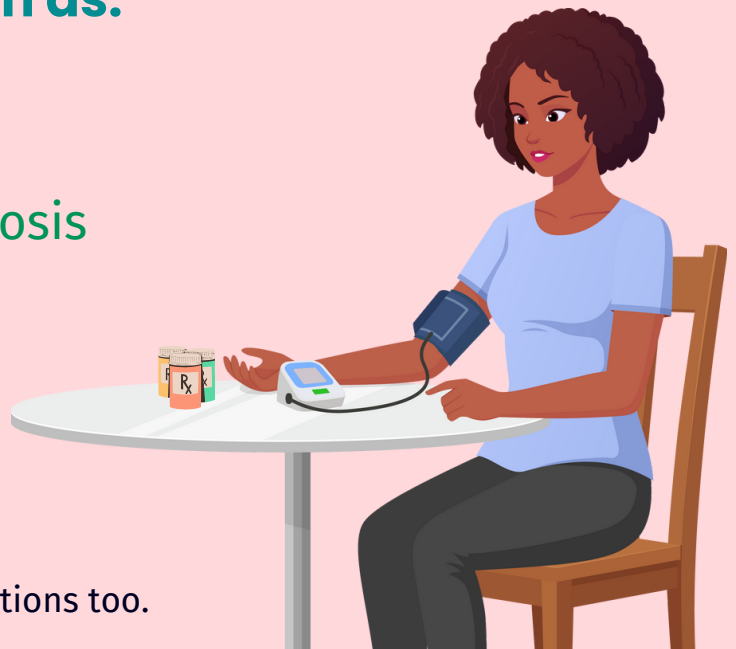


Common Health Problems with mBC

Women with Stage IV Breast Cancer can also live with other health problems, such as:

- Arthritis or chronic pain
- Depression and anxiety
- Bone issues like osteoporosis
- Weight-related problems
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Heart disease
- Kidney disease

These health issues often need daily medications too.



There are some health problems that can be caused by breast cancer treatments. Even if you didn't have these health problems before your cancer diagnosis, your body can still develop these health problems. If you already had health problems before, your breast cancer treatment might make them worse. It's important that you keep track of your symptoms. If you notice any symptoms get worse or you get them more often now that you're on breast cancer treatment, talk to your doctor about it to see what you can do. Make sure you continue your regular yearly physical check-ups with your doctor to screen for other health problems.

Challenges Reported by Black & Hispanic Women

Black and Hispanic women often feel overwhelmed by the number of prescriptions they have to take, especially when their doctors don't explain to them what their medications are for until they ask them to. They can feel as though side effects and drug interaction are not clearly explained to them. There is usually a fear of speaking up, but remember that you are the center of your care team. Keeping track of your medications, asking questions, and speaking up helps protect your health and your quality of life.

“Being responsible for my medication and scheduled infusions is important. To manage my medications and my treatment, I make sure I have an appointment calendar reminder that allows me to see how my month will be.”

— Amelia, mBC patient

“mBC caused my DVT, lymphedema, and high blood pressure. I take my blood pressure fairly regularly. I can be forgetful, but handle my medications well by tracking off-and-on weeks with the chemo pill. The rest of my medications, I take at the same time. I have them all refilled on the same day of the month, which helps track them.”

— Silvia, mBC patient



Resources

- [Patient Empowerment Network](#)
- [Metastatic Trial Talk](#)
 - [Managing Other Health Conditions while Living with mBC](#)
 - [Side Effects of mBC Treatments](#)
 - [Which Foods, Supplements, and Drugs Should I Avoid During MBC Treatment?](#)
- [BreastCancer.org](#)
 - [Heart Disease, High Blood Pressure, and Osteoporosis in Women Treated for Breast Cancer](#)
 - [Breast Cancer Treatment and Lung Problems](#)
- [Breast Cancer Research Foundation](#)
- [Cancer Drug Interactions Archive](#)
- [Los Angeles Cancer Network](#)
- [Patient Resource](#)
- [American Institute for Cancer Research](#)
- [American Cancer Society](#)
- [Cancer Care](#)
- [Cancer Center](#)
 - [How to Manage Your High Blood Pressure During Cancer Treatment](#)



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