

1 INTRODUCTION

The State of California requires that your doctor give you this brochure if you are about to have a breast biopsy or have been diagnosed with breast cancer.

You may be going through all kinds of feelings. You may be worried and anxious. You may be in shock or feel alone. It may be hard for you to concentrate. These reactions are normal.

The hope is that this booklet will prove to be a valuable guide. It is intended to help you become a partner in making choices with your health care team. These tips may make it easier for you to use this booklet:

- Read the material as you need it. If you are about to get a biopsy, only read the section on Breast Biopsy. You may feel better finding out that most breast lumps are not cancer.
- If you already have been diagnosed with cancer, have a friend or someone on your health care team read this booklet along with you. Or have them read it and discuss the material with them when you are ready.
- The medical words that you hear as you go through biopsy and treatment are used in this brochure. Knowing the meaning of the words that you are hearing can help you understand what is happening and make informed choices. Remember, there is no one “right” treatment for every woman. New options are available today that were not offered even a few years ago.
- As you go through the diagnosis and treatment processes, you may find it helpful to write out questions **before** you meet with your doctor. Some of the questions you may want to ask are in the side margins of this brochure. (You may also want to tape record information that is given to you. Consider asking a friend or family member to come with you during health care appointments.)
- Most important, never be afraid to have information repeated and to ask questions. There is no “dumb” question when you are faced with cancer.
- For more free information or to talk to someone (in English or Spanish), call the National Cancer Institute’s hotline:

1-800-4-CANCER