**SARATH PALAKODETI**
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Comprehensive Breast & Aesthetic Surgery
*Elegant · Elevated · Experience*

PATIENT RESOURCE · NEWLY DIAGNOSED

# You Just Got Diagnosed With Breast Cancer. Here’s What to Do Next.

The next 72 hours matter. This guide covers what to do, what not to do, what to gather, and what to ask — in plain language, in the right order.

DO THIS FIRST

## Before you do anything else — a note about what comes next

The first instinct after a breast cancer diagnosis is to Google everything. That instinct is understandable — information is part of how you take control of a situation that feels out of control. But there is a lot of good information on the internet about breast cancer, and a lot of bad information. The difference is not always obvious.

**Trusted sources worth your time:**

- drpalakodeti.com — written specifically for patients navigating diagnosis and surgical decisions
- American Cancer Society — cancer.org — evidence-based, patient-facing, regularly updated
- American Society of Breast Surgeons — breastsurgeons.org — sets the surgical standards for breast cancer care

Forums, social media groups, individual patient stories, and statistics not tied to your specific cancer type and stage should be read with caution and discussed with your care team before drawing conclusions.

### A note about going to Nashville or Louisville

When a diagnosis feels serious, the immediate instinct for many patients in our region is to think: I need to go somewhere bigger. Vanderbilt. U of L. Somewhere with a bigger name.

That instinct is understandable. Here is an honest answer.

Dr. Palakodeti trained at Cleveland Clinic before bringing that training to Bowling Green. The surgical standards, techniques, and credentials he practices with were not acquired locally — they were acquired at one of the most respected medical institutions in the country and applied here, in this community, for the patients who live here.

For most early-stage breast cancer, the distance to a major academic center is not what determines the quality of your care. The surgeon’s training, credentials, and range of technique are what determine that. If after a consultation you feel your situation calls for care elsewhere, Dr. Palakodeti will tell you honestly and help you get there. But come in first. Understand your options. Then decide.

YOUR NEXT 72 HOURS

## Six specific steps — in order

**1. Tell the people you want to tell — and no one else yet.**

Keep the circle small until you have more information. You do not need to manage other people's reactions while still processing your own.

**2. Write down everything you know so far.**

Biopsy result, cancer type, grade if given, and the contact information of the physician who delivered the diagnosis.

**3. Request your biopsy pathology report.**

You are entitled to a copy. Request it from the facility that performed your biopsy. Having the document means every physician you see starts from the same information.

**4. Schedule a surgical consultation promptly.**

Surgery is almost always part of breast cancer treatment. The surgical consultation is where your full range of options is explained. Dr. Palakodeti's office prioritizes newly diagnosed patients for prompt scheduling.

**5. Call your OB/GYN or primary care physician.**

Let them know you have a diagnosis. They can help coordinate next steps and ensure your care is moving in the right direction.

**6. Do not make any irreversible decisions yet.**

You do not need to decide between lumpectomy and mastectomy today. Most breast cancers found through screening do not require emergency surgery. You have time — use it.

## BRING THESE TO YOUR SURGICAL CONSULTATION

- ■ Your biopsy pathology report
- ■ A list of your current medications
- ■ A trusted person — spouse, partner, family member, or friend
- ■ Your breast imaging reports (mammogram, ultrasound, MRI if performed)
- ■ Your insurance card and photo ID
- ■ A written list of every question you have, no matter how basic it feels

## QUESTIONS TO ASK AT YOUR SURGICAL CONSULTATION

- ■ What type of breast cancer do I have and what does that mean for my treatment?
- ■ What additional imaging or testing do I need before we can finalize my plan?
- ■ Am I a candidate for lumpectomy, or is mastectomy recommended for my situation?
- ■ If lumpectomy is an option, are oncoplastic techniques available to preserve appearance?
- ■ If mastectomy is recommended, what reconstruction options do I have — and can reconstruction happen at the same time?
- ■ How quickly do I need to decide, and is it appropriate to seek a second opinion first?
- ■ Who else will be part of my care team, and how does coordination between them work?

## MY QUESTIONS & NOTES

Write your questions and notes below.

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