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Program on
Breast Cancer and Environmental Risk Factors

SPRECHER
INSTITUTE
for Comparative
Cancer Research

Biology of Cancer and the Breast

Frequently Asked Questions

■ Question

Is there a link between breast tissue trauma and breast cancer?

■ Answer

It is generally accepted that trauma, including a blow to the breast or surgery, does not cause breast cancer.

How Does Breast Cancer Develop?

Breast cancer develops through a multi-step process in which normal, healthy cells go through stages that eventually change them to abnormal cells that multiply out of control. Part of this multi-step process includes acquiring changes (called mutations) to key genes that control cell proliferation. While mutations, can be thought of as a type of damage, it is not damage caused by trauma (blows to the breast or surgery). Mutations are damage on the molecular level.

Is Research Continuing?

Scientists are investigating whether surgical procedures in women that already have breast cancer can affect whether the tumor can spread to other parts of the body. Please see Fact Sheet 5 [The Biology of Breast Cancer](#) to learn more about how breast cancer develops.

Answered by: [Suzanne Snedeker, Ph.D.](#)

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