

Eastern HEALTH

What is ER/PR?

All patients who have had breast cancer have been tested for the presence or absence of estrogen and progesterone receptors (ER and PR). The presence or absence of ER and PR helps determine the most appropriate treatment of breast cancer.

When your ER and PR are positive, hormone therapy is one treatment option open to you. ER and PR are just one of the many things oncologists look at to determine the type of cancer treatment a patient will receive.

What is happening now? Why are some test results different?

Eastern Health has begun retesting a select group of breast cancer patients – those whose results indicated that they were negative for ER and PR. In 2004, the lab at the Health Sciences that does all of the ER and PR testing for the province introduced a new piece of technology and we discovered some inconsistent results from the old system.

This has prompted Eastern Health to re-test all the negative ER and PR receptors results since 1997 to ensure that all patients have every treatment opportunity that may be available to them.

We are using previously collected tissue samples, so patients are not required to come to hospital or have any additional testing.

Only a small percentage of breast cancer patients may be affected by this retesting.

I haven't been contacted, what should I do?

The laboratory is continuing to test results and patients are being contacted if there is a change to their result and their treatment may be affected. If you had breast cancer and are concerned about your previous test results and treatment, you may wish to contact your oncologist, surgeon or family doctor.

You may also call the Patient Relations Officer at Eastern Health at 777-6500. She will attempt to answer your questions or link you with someone who can help.