Metastatic breast cancer (MBC) is an advanced stage (stage IV) of breast cancer where tumor cells have spread to other parts of the body, such as the bones, liver, lungs or brain. Most breast cancer deaths are a result of metastasis.

In the 1970s, only 10 percent of women survived five years after a diagnosis of MBC. Today, because of research and the discovery of new and more-effective treatments, this has increased to an average of 25 percent. While MBC is treatable, it is not currently curable. This is, in part, because we do not know what causes cancer cells to spread. Komen is dedicated to understanding why metastasis occurs and how to stop it, and has invested nearly half of new research funding for 2015 in metastatic breast cancer research.

More than $166 million in over 400 research grants and more than 40 clinical trials focused on MBC

What We’re Investigating

- Identifying the genes and processes that cause breast cancer cells to metastasize
- Developing and testing new therapies to both prevent and treat metastatic breast cancer
- Discovering new methods for predicting or detecting metastasis using urine or blood tests or body scans

What We’ve Learned from Komen-funded research

- Tilmanocept (Lymphoseek), a novel FDA approved imaging method, can be used to more-effectively detect whether breast cancer has spread to the lymph nodes.
- A molecule that reduces the stiffness and density of breast tissue, by blocking formation of collagen fibers, may be used to prevent tumor cells from invading and metastasizing to other tissues.
- The presence of certain types of circulating tumor cells (CTC) may be used as a biomarker to predict who is at high risk for metastasis and may serve a drug target to prevent MBC.

Learn more about metastatic breast cancer
http://sgk.mn/1wKF0fE

Read more about the development of Lymphoseek in our Stories of Discovery series.
http://sgk.mn/IhXCYWa

Read more about circulating tumor cells (CTC) as a biomarker and drug target for MBC in our Science Buzz series.
http://sgk.mn/leDrnjd