



Inflammatory Breast Cancer (IBC) is a highly aggressive breast cancer characterized by the blockage of breast lymph vessels by tumor cell emboli causing inflammatory-like changes, including breast swelling and skin changes. These changes are commonly mistaken for breast infections, leading to delayed diagnosis.

IBC progresses quickly, possibly within weeks to months. By becoming familiar with IBC signs and symptoms, providers can more quickly get IBC patients the urgent care they need.

Signs and Symptoms of Inflammatory Breast Cancer

Patients presenting with one or more of the following changes should be evaluated for cancer. Evaluation should include both a mammogram and ultrasound even though these may be negative since **IBC commonly lacks a dominant mass.**

SKIN CHANGES

Peau d'orange
(orange peel-like appearance)



Skin Edema and Thickening



Erythema or Other Skin Discoloration



NIPPLE CHANGES

Nipple Flattening



SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS NOT PICTURED

Rapid Onset
(within 3-6 months)

Breast Pain,
Itching,
Warm to
the Touch

Swollen Lymph
Nodes Near
Armpit and/or
Collarbone

Nipple Inversion or
Retraction

Crusting of Nipple
Skin or Areola



BREAST SWELLING

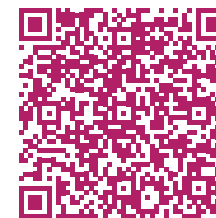


IBC Fast Facts

- IBC accounts for 1-5% of all breast cancer cases in the U.S.¹, with a five-year relative survival rate of 39%.²
- About one-third of women with IBC already have metastatic disease when diagnosed.⁶
- Women who are younger^{1,3}, obese^{1,4} or Black and African American⁵, are more likely to be diagnosed with IBC than others.
- Accurate, rapid diagnosis and optimal use of trimodality treatment without de-escalation can save countless lives.^{11,12}

An Online Tool is Available to Help Health Care Providers Identify IBC

The **IBC Scoring System** is a proposed set of common diagnostic criteria designed for health care providers to identify IBC⁷. Developed by renowned breast cancer experts, this tool is intended to increase diagnostic accuracy, guide treatment decisions and inclusion in clinical trials, and aid basic research.



An easy-to-use online version of the IBC Scoring System is available to help health care providers recognize and more effectively diagnose IBC in the clinic.

Access the IBC Scoring System Online Tool at komen.org/ibc-calc or scan the QR Code.



The IBC Scoring System was developed by the Susan G. Komen-IBCRF IBC Collaborative in Partnership with the Milburn Foundation.



Take Breast Medical Photographs

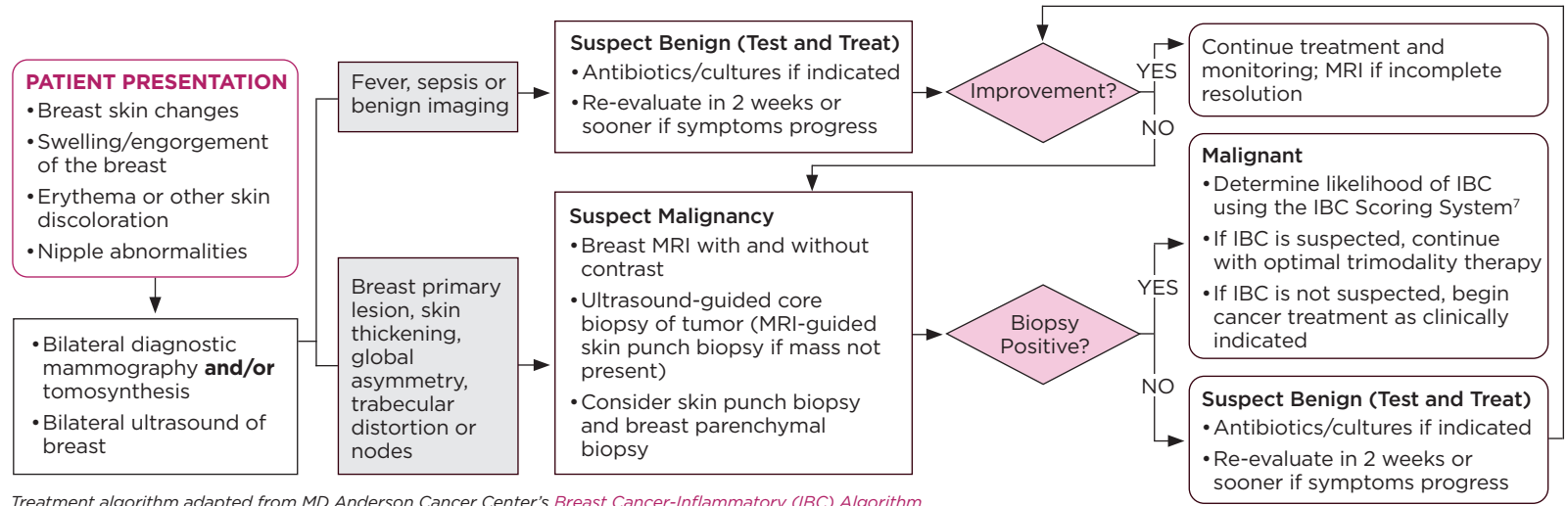
Breast medical photographs are a critical piece of documentation

for IBC patients as they help guide radiation treatments and aid in evaluation of treatment response¹⁰. IBC breast photographs should:

- Be taken at the time of diagnosis, prior to treatment.
- Include both breasts to better assess breast asymmetry.

Breast Infection or Inflammatory Breast Cancer?

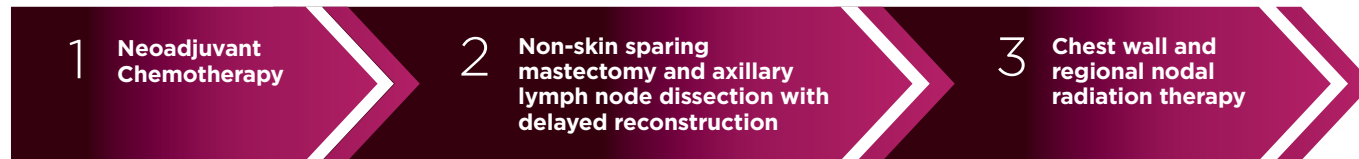
The symptoms of IBC commonly present like a breast infection. Therefore, patients are often first treated with antibiotics leading to delayed diagnosis. Due to the aggressive nature of this disease, it is imperative that health care providers include IBC in the differential diagnosis of any women experiencing infection-like symptoms within the breast⁶.



Treatment algorithm adapted from MD Anderson Cancer Center's [Breast Cancer-Inflammatory \(IBC\) Algorithm](#)

Treating Inflammatory Breast Cancer

The NCCN standard of care⁸ for patients diagnosed with stage 3 (and in some cases, stage 4) IBC is trimodality therapy consisting of:



Trimodality therapy is a significant, independent determinant of IBC patient survival⁹ and effective treatment requires a multidisciplinary care team that can be coordinated quickly⁶.

Learn More: [Komen.org/ibc](https://www.komen.org/ibc) | [NCCN Guidelines: Inflammatory Breast Cancer](#)

References

¹NIH, National Cancer Institute. *Inflammatory Breast Cancer Fact Sheet*. 2016. ²American Cancer Society. *Types of Breast Cancer: Inflammatory Breast Cancer*. 2023. ³Taghian A. and Merajver SD. UpToDate. 2022. ⁴Atkinson RL. et al. *Cancer Causes Control*. 2016. ⁵Abraham et al. *Breast Cancer Res Treat*. 2021. ⁶Chippa and Barazi. *Inflammatory Breast Cancer*. StatPearls (Internet). 2022. ⁷Jagsi R. et al. *Breast Cancer Res Treat*. 2022. ⁸Gradishar et al. *JNCCN*. 2022. ⁹Rueth et al. *J Clin Oncol*. 2014. ¹⁰Balema et al. *Cancer Med*. 2021. ¹¹Adesoye et al. *Ann Surg Oncol*. 2023. ¹²Drapalik et.al. *Ann Surg Oncol*. 2023