

Carcinoma In Situ: Comedo Pattern

Definition of Terms:

- **Benign** — Not cancerous; no threat to the body
- **Biopsy** — Procedure to remove cells or tissues for study by a pathologist
- **Calcifications** — Small areas of calcium deposits seen during mammography; may be related to a malignant or a benign condition
- **Carcinoma** — Cancer cells that start in the surface layers or lining of the ducts
- **In Situ** — In one contained area; has not invaded cell wall of duct
- **Lymph Nodes** — Pea-like areas found in the lymphatic system that act as filters of the body's waste; the majority of the nodes that filter waste from the breast tissues are located under the arm
- **Metastasis** — Cancer that has spread to another part of the body
- **Malignant** — Cancerous; a threat to the body

Carcinoma in situ with a comedo pattern is a form of ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS) that exhibits a higher risk of being aggressive.

When cancer cells grow and fill the ducts, cells often begin dying (necrosis) and leave behind microcalcifications, a marker for in situ cancer.

After a biopsy, the pathologist identifies cells within the ducts with a pattern called comedo. Identification of a comedo pattern indicates a more aggressive in situ cancer. If a comedo characteristic is identified, the ductal carcinoma in situ cancer (DCIS) has a higher incidence of invading the walls of the ducts than one that does not have a comedo component. However, because the cancer is still inside of the ducts, it is not life-threatening and can be removed and treated successfully.

Your healthcare provider will offer you treatment options that may include mastectomy or lumpectomy followed by radiation therapy and other treatments.

