



*Jen B.*

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I was diagnosed with a rare form of breast cancer called inflammatory breast cancer in July 2016 at the age of 34 after noticing some signs and symptoms of IBC. IBC presents with breast swelling, thickness and change of color and appearance of the skin. By the time IBC is diagnosed it is typically at stage III or sometimes stage IV. I was first misdiagnosed with mastitis, and was sent home with antibiotics. After the infection and swelling did not clear up, I was sent for a mammogram, ultrasound then immediate biopsy to confirm the breast cancer diagnosis.

I started chemo right away. Scans showed that there was a small cancerous lesion on my liver in August 2016, making the cancer stage IV. I went to Dana Farber in Boston to be a part of research studies and to go for a second opinion as they have a specialty IBC clinic. I love that both teams here at URMC and in Boston talk about my care. I have been on continuous chemotherapy since first diagnosed and finished 6 weeks of intense radiation in March 2018. My tumor markers are the lowest they have ever been, but I know things can always change.

I enjoy spending time with my family, friends, and husband Andy. I find strength and meaning by helping others through volunteer work and my public blog that aims to get the word out about IBC and metastatic breast cancer. My blog can be found on Facebook, just search “Jen’s hike, life with IBC.” I am a big advocate for research, METAvivor, and for living fully in the moment. I take each day one hour and one day at a time. I am so thankful for the support groups and programs at BCCR. I live each day with gratitude, and a smile because I am alive.