


# Breast Screening Practices in Canada

Comparing the  
provinces and  
territories on  
5 key practices.



**DENSE BREASTS**  
C A N A D A



## **Dense Breasts Canada compared breast screening programs across the country.**

**Does the province's screening program:**

- 1) Allow women to self-refer for mammograms starting at age 40?
- 2) Offer annual mammograms for women ages 40-49?
- 3) Tell all women their breast density after a screening mammogram?
- 4) Offer annual mammograms for women with Category D density?
- 5) Allow women to self-refer for mammograms after age 74?

The provincial comparison below highlights the differences between the provinces and the gaps in access to optimal breast screening. If provinces are in the process of making a change, that is indicated as well.

Where you live should not matter when it comes to optimal breast screening, but it does.





## Nova Scotia

### Does Nova Scotia:

- 1) Allow women to self-refer for mammograms starting at age 40?  
Yes
- 2) Offer annual mammograms, ages 40-49?  
Yes
- 3) Tell all women their breast density after a screening mammogram?  
Yes
- 4) Offer annual mammograms for women with Category D density?  
Yes
- 5) Allow women to self-refer for mammograms after age 74?  
Yes

Rating: 5/5

### Kudos:

- ✓ Women can self-refer, starting at 40.
- ✓ Women, ages 40-49 can screen annually.
- ✓ The breast density category is mailed to women in their result letter.
- ✓ Women can continue to self-refer for screening after age 74.
- ✓ Annual mammograms for women with Category D density.

### Changes still needed:

- Access to screening ultrasound for women with dense breasts.

**Advocacy update:** Advocacy continues for access to screening ultrasound.

Help advocate for change in Nova Scotia by sending the health minister this [letter](#)

Check out our [self-advocacy toolkit](#) to get the screening you need.

Rating:  
5/5





# Yukon Territory

## Does Yukon Territory:

1) Allow women to self-refer for mammograms starting at age 40?

Yes

2) Offer annual mammograms, ages 40-49?

Yes

3) Tell all women their breast density after a screening mammogram?

Yes

4) Offer annual mammograms for women with Category D density?

Yes

5) Offer self-referral for a mammogram after age 74?

Yes

Rating: 5/5

## Kudos:

- ✓ Women can self-refer, starting at 40.
- ✓ Women, ages 40-49, can screen annually.
- ✓ Women with Category D density are offered annual mammograms.
- ✓ Women can continue to self-refer for screening after age 74.

## Changes still needed:

- Better access to screening ultrasound for women with dense breasts.

Check out our [self-advocacy toolkit](#) to get the screening you need.

Rating:  
5/5





## Prince Edward Island

### Does Prince Edward Island:

1) Allow women to self-refer for mammograms starting at age 40?

Yes

2) Offer annual mammograms, ages 40-49?

Yes

3) Tell all women their breast density after a screening mammogram?

Yes

4) Offer annual mammograms for women with Category D density?

Yes

5) Allow women to self-refer for mammograms after age 74?

No

Rating: 4/5

### Kudos:

- ✓ Women can self-refer, starting at 40.
- ✓ Women, ages 40-49, can screen annually.
- ✓ The breast density category, A, B, C or D, is mailed to women in their result letter.
- ✓ Women with Category D density are offered annual mammograms.

### Changes still needed:

- Self-referral for screening after age 74.
- Better access to screening ultrasound for women with dense breasts.

**Advocacy update:** In 2019, the government committed to screening ultrasound for women with dense breasts. DBC and opposition MLAs continue to advocate for implementation.

Help advocate for change in PEI by sending the health minister this [letter](#)

Check out our [self-advocacy toolkit](#) to get the screening you need.

Rating:  
4/5





## British Columbia

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### Does British Columbia:

1) Allow women to self-refer for mammograms starting at age 40?

Yes

2) Offer annual mammograms, ages 40-49?

No

3) Tell all women their breast density after a screening mammogram?

Yes

4) Offer annual mammograms for women with Category D density?

No

5) Allow women to self-refer for mammograms after age 74?

Yes

Rating: 3/5

### Kudos:

- ✓ Women can self-refer for a mammogram, starting at age 40.
- ✓ The breast density category is mailed to women in their result letter.
- ✓ Women can continue to self-refer for screening after age 74.
- ✓ Women with Category C or D density can access screening ultrasound with a requisition.

### Changes still needed:

- Annual screening ages 40-49; women can only self-refer every 22 months.
- Annual mammograms for women with Category D density.

**Advocacy update:** Advocacy continues for increased access to screening ultrasound with MLA and caucus meetings scheduled for early 2023.

Help advocate for change in British Columbia by sending your health minister this [letter](#).

Check out our [self-advocacy toolkit](#) to get the screening you need.

Rating:  
3/5





## Saskatchewan

### Does Saskatchewan:

- 1) Allow women to self-refer for mammograms starting at age 40?  
**No. Lowering the age to 47, January 1, 2025. Then to age 44 July, 2025. Then to age 40 January 2026.**
- 2) Offer annual mammograms, ages 40-49?  
**No**
- 3) Tell all women their breast density after a screening mammogram?  
**Yes**
- 4) Offer annual mammograms for women with Category D density?  
**Yes**
- 5) Allow women to self-refer for mammograms after age 74?  
**Yes**

**Rating: 3/5**

### Kudos:

- ✓ Women with Category D density are offered annual mammograms.
- ✓ Women can continue to self-refer for screening after age 74.

### Changes still needed:

- Self-referral for screening at 40.
- Better access to screening ultrasound for women with dense breasts.

**Rating:  
3/5**





## Northwest Territories

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### Does Northwest Territories:

1) Offer self-referral for a mammogram starting at 40?

**No, but women can begin to self-refer at 45. Women can also self-refer 40-44 after their first requisition.**

2) Offer annual mammograms, ages 40-49?

**Yes, but only ages 40-44.**

3) Tell all women their breast density after a screening mammogram?

**Yes**

4) Offer annual mammograms for women with Category D density?

**Yes. Screening ultrasound is also offered for Category D.**

5) Allow women to self-refer for mammograms after age 74?

**No**

**Rating: 3/5**

### Kudos:

- ✓ Women need a requisition for the first screen in the 40s, but can self-refer thereafter.
- ✓ The breast density category is mailed in the results letter.
- ✓ Women with Category D density are offered annual mammograms and have access to ultrasound.

### Changes still needed:

- Self-referral for screening, starting at 40 instead of 45.

Check out our [self-advocacy toolkit](#) to get the screening you need.

Rating:  
3/5





## Ontario

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### Does Ontario:

1) Offer self-referral for a mammogram starting at 40?

Yes

2) Offer annual mammograms, ages 40-49?

No

3) Tell all women their breast density after a screening mammogram?

Yes

4) Offer annual mammograms for women with Category D density?

Yes

5) Offer self-referral for a mammogram after age 74?

No

Rating: 3/5

### Kudos:

- ✓ Self-referral for screening, starting at 40.
- ✓ Women with Category D density can also choose between MRI every two years and ultrasound every year, depending on capacity.

### Changes still needed:

- Self-referral for screening after age 74

Rating:

3/5

Check out our [self-advocacy toolkit](#) to get the screening you need.

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## Alberta

### Does Alberta:

- 1) Allow women to self-refer for mammograms starting at age 40?  
**No, but women can begin to self-refer at 45. Women can also self-refer 40-44 after their first requisition.**
- 2) Offer annual mammograms, ages 40-49?  
**Yes**
- 3) Tell all women their breast density after a screening mammogram?  
**Yes**
- 4) Offer annual mammograms for women with Category D density?  
**No**
- 5) Allow women to self-refer for mammograms after age 74?  
**No**

Rating: 2/5

### Kudos:

- ✓ Women can self-refer after their first screen ages 40-45 or self-refer after age 45.
- ✓ Women can screen annually 40-49.
- ✓ The breast density category is mailed to women in their result letter.
- ✓ Women with Category C or D density can access screening ultrasound with a requisition.

### Changes still needed:

- Self-referral for screening at 40
- Self-referral for screening after age 74.
- Annual mammograms for women with Category D density.

**Advocacy Update:** Advocacy continues for self-referral at age 40.

Help advocate for change in Alberta by sending your health minister this [letter](#)

Check out our [self-advocacy toolkit](#) to get the screening you need.

Rating:  
2/5





## Manitoba

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### Does Manitoba:

- 1) Allow women to self-refer for mammograms starting at age 40?  
**No. Lowering the age to 45 end of 2025. Then to 40, timeline TBD.**
- 2) Offer annual mammograms, ages 40-49?  
**No**
- 3) Tell all women their breast density after a screening mammogram?  
**Yes**
- 4) Offer annual mammograms for women with Category D density?  
**No**
- 5) Allow women to self-refer for mammograms after age 74?  
**Yes**

Rating: 2/5

### Kudos:

- ✓ The breast density category is mailed to women in their results letter.
- ✓ Women can continue to self-refer after 74.

### Changes still needed:

- Self-referral for screening, starting at 40
- Annual mammograms for women with Category D density.
- Better access to screening ultrasound for women with dense breasts.

**Advocacy update:** Much change is needed in Manitoba and Dense Breasts Canada is actively advocating.

Help advocate for change in Manitoba by sending your health minister this [letter](#)

Check out our [self-advocacy toolkit](#) to get the screening you need.

Rating:  
2/5





## Newfoundland and Labrador

### Does Newfoundland and Labrador:

- 1) Allow women to self-refer for mammograms starting at age 40?  
**No. Announced self-referral at 40 to be implemented, no timeline yet.**
- 2) Offer annual mammograms, ages 40-49?  
**No**
- 3) Tell all women their breast density after a screening mammogram?  
**No. In progress, no timeline.**
- 4) Offer annual mammograms for women with Category D density?  
**Yes**
- 5) Allow women to self-refer for mammograms after age 74?  
**Yes**

Rating: 2/5

### Kudos:

- Women with Category D density are offered annual mammograms.
- Women can continue to self-refer for screening after age 74.

### Changes still needed:

- Better access to screening ultrasound for women with dense breasts.
- Date needed for self refer for a mammogram, starting at age 40.
- Date needed for implementation of density notification.

Rating:  
2/5

Check out our [self-advocacy toolkit](#) to get the screening you need.





## New Brunswick

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### Does New Brunswick:

1) Offer self-referral for a mammogram starting at 40?

Yes

2) Offer annual mammograms, ages 40-49?

No

3) Tell all women their breast density after a screening mammogram?

Yes

4) Offer annual mammograms for women with Category D density?

No

5) Offer self-referral for a mammogram after age 74?

No

Rating: 2/5

### Kudos:

- ✓ The breast density category is mailed to women in their results letter.
- ✓ Women can self-refer for a mammogram, starting at age 40

### Changes still needed:

- Annual mammograms for women with Category D density.
- Self-referral for screening after age 74
- Better access to ultrasound for women with dense breasts

**Advocacy update:** There is communication with the screening program and political representatives in New Brunswick, advocating for ultrasound for women with dense breasts.

Check out our [self-advocacy toolkit](#) to get the screening you need.

Rating:  
2/5





## Quebec

### Does Quebec:

1) Offer self-referral for a mammogram starting at 40?

No

2) Offer annual mammograms, ages 40-49?

No

3) Tell all women their breast density after a screening mammogram?

Yes

4) Offer annual mammograms for women with Category D density?

No

5) Offer self-referral for a mammogram after age 74?

No

Rating: 0/5

Kudos: None

### Still needed:

- Self-referral for screening, starting at 40
- All women need to be directly informed of their breast density in the mail. Currently, the information is in the online health portal.
- Annual mammograms for women with Category D density.
- Self-referral for screening after age 69
- Better access to ultrasound for women with dense breasts

**Advocacy update:** There are continuous advocacy efforts with the screening program and political representatives in Quebec with regards to screening at 40 and density notification.

Help advocate for change in Quebec by sending your health minister this [letter](#)

Check out our [self-advocacy toolkit](#) to get the screening you need.

Rating:  
1/5



# Breast Screening Practices in Canada

Province/ Territory	At age 40 can self-refer for a mammogram.	Age 40 to 49 self-referral in progress	Breast density category mailed to all women having a screening mammogram.	Annual mammogram for category D density.	After age 74 can self-refer (others need req.)
BC	Yes		Yes		Yes
NS	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes
PEI	Yes		Yes	Yes	
YT	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes
AB	After 1st screen or age 45		Yes		
MB		Age 45 Dec.2025	Yes		Yes
NB	Yes		Yes		
SK		Age 47 Jan. 2025	Online Portal	Yes	Yes
ON	Yes		Yes	Yes	
NL		In Progress, TBD	In Progress	Yes	Yes
QC		Under Review	Online Portal		
NWT	After 1st screen or age 45		Yes	Yes	

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For more information on current, relevant evidence on breast screening in Canada, Visit [densebreastscanada.ca](https://densebreastscanada.ca) and [mybreastscreening.ca](https://mybreastscreening.ca)



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