

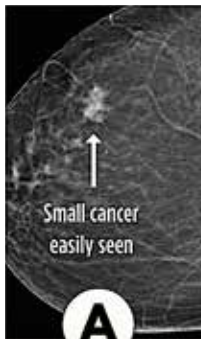
YOUR BREAST DENSITY MATTERS



Dense breasts can make breast cancer harder to find on a mammogram and also can increase your risk of developing breast cancer. However, there are steps you can take to minimize your risk.

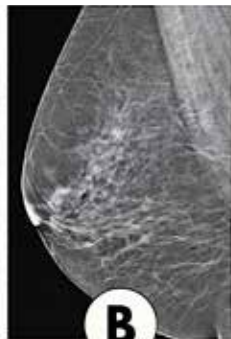
UNDERSTAND YOUR RISK.





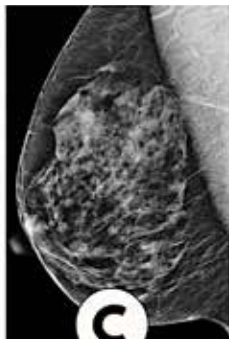
A

FATTY



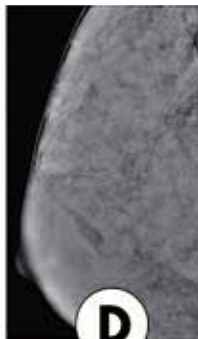
B

**SCATTERED AREAS
OF DENSITY**



C

**HETEROGENEOUSLY
DENSE**



D

**EXTREMELY
DENSE**

WHAT IS BREAST DENSITY?

Every woman's breast is composed of fat and breast tissue, but the proportions vary. On a mammogram, fat appears dark gray or black while breast tissue and cancer appear white.

There are 4 categories of breast density: A, B, C, D. Categories C and D are considered dense breasts. Dense breasts are common and normal; in fact, 43% of women ages 40+ have dense breasts.



HOW IS BREAST DENSITY DETERMINED?

- Breast density is assessed by the radiologist viewing your mammogram.
- Breast density is not determined by breast size or touch.
- Dense breasts can feel soft, lumpy or firm and so can fatty breasts.

5 REASONS WHY YOUR BREAST DENSITY MATTERS

1. Dense breasts make it harder to see cancer on a mammogram.

Dense breasts are the number one reason for cancer being missed by mammography since both cancer and dense tissue show up white on a mammogram. Mammograms miss about 30% of cancers in category C and 40% in category D.

2. Dense breasts increase breast cancer risk.

The higher the density, the higher the cancer risk. Cancer is 4-6 times more likely in the highest density category (D) than the lowest category (A).

3. Higher risk of interval cancer.

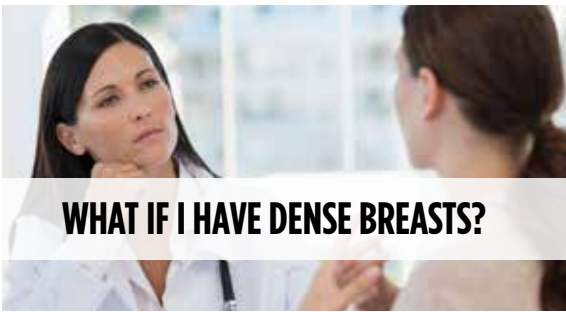
Women with category D are 13-18 times more likely than women in category A to have breast cancer discovered between mammogram screenings when cancers are larger and can be felt, and more likely to have started to spread.

4. Higher risk of cancer in the other breast.

Women with breast cancer who have dense breasts are nearly twice as likely to develop cancer in the opposite breast.

5. Greater risk of cancer than family history.

Dense breasts pose a greater risk for developing breast cancer than a family history of breast cancer.



WHAT IF I HAVE DENSE BREASTS?

- Speak with your healthcare provider about your breast density, other breast cancer risk factors and your screening options.
- Perform regular self-exams between screenings. A normal mammogram result may not be accurate.
- To improve early detection, consider additional screening, such as ultrasound and/or MRI.
- Complete the Tyrer-Cuzick Risk Calculator to assess if your risk falls in the high risk category.
- Consider modifying lifestyle factors such as diet, exercise, alcohol intake and hormone use to decrease cancer risk.
- Continue to have mammograms because they can detect calcifications, which can be the earliest sign of cancer.
- If you're diagnosed with breast cancer, consider an MRI to ensure no additional tumours are hidden.

LEADING EXPERTS WORLDWIDE RECOMMEND SUPPLEMENTAL SCREENING FOR WOMEN WITH DENSE BREASTS.

The Canadian Society of Breast Imaging recommends that women at average risk with density category C or D should be offered supplemental screening: MRI or Contrast-Enhanced Mammography every 2 years, or Ultrasound annually.

Ultrasound finds an additional 2-7 cancers per 1000 women screened that were not detected by mammogram. MRI finds an additional 10-16 cancers per 1000 women. MRI capacity is limited.

Early detection of cancer is critical for less invasive treatment and the best outcomes. You are your own best advocate.



Visit densebreastscanada.ca for more information and tips for your conversation with your healthcare provider.