

BREAST DENSITY

BreastCheck provides breast density information on mammogram result letters in one of two categories:

1. less than 75% dense breast tissue or
2. more than 75% dense breast tissue (extremely dense).

What is breast density?

Breast density is a term used to describe how breast tissue appears on a mammogram image. Breast density is not related to how your breasts look (size or shape) or feel. When a person has more glandular and fibrous connective tissue than fatty tissue, their breast tissue may be called dense. Dense breast tissue is common and normal.

How is breast density determined?

Breast density can only be determined from a mammogram by a radiologist. A radiologist is a specially trained doctor who looks at medical test images, like mammograms, to diagnose and treat disease.

Cancerous tissue can look like dense breast tissue on a mammogram:

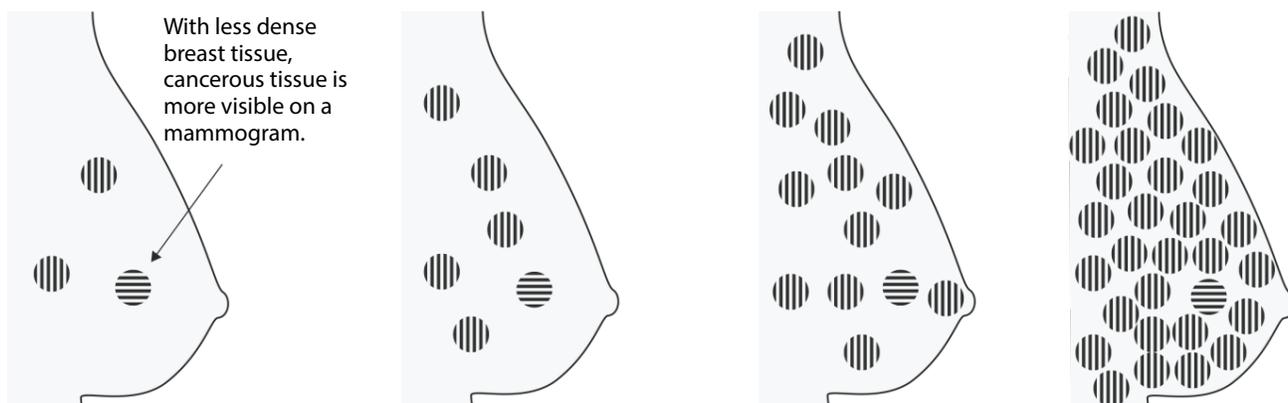
 Dense breast tissue  Cancerous tissue

LESS DENSE

Almost entirely fatty tissue

MORE DENSE

Almost no fatty tissue



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Why is breast density important?

Dense breasts:

- increase your risk of developing breast cancer.
- make it harder to see breast cancer on a mammogram.

Having dense breasts does not necessarily mean that you will develop breast cancer. Density is only one of the risk factors for breast cancer. Other common risk factors for women include:

- Increasing age
- Personal history of breast abnormalities or breast cancer
- Genetic factors (BRCA1, BRCA2. etc.)
- Family history of breast or ovarian cancer

What should I do if I have dense breasts?

Regular mammograms are the best way to screen for breast cancer. Most cancers are found on a mammogram but some may not be seen. This is more common if breasts are extremely dense.

There is no research to suggest that women with dense breasts should have more tests or different tests after a normal mammogram.

If your most recent mammogram result says that you have dense breasts and you are concerned about your risk of developing breast cancer, talk to your healthcare provider about your personal risk factors.

Know your breasts

Know what looks and feels normal for your breasts and see your healthcare provider if you notice any of the changes listed below, even if your last screening mammogram was normal:



Puckering of the skin.



Change in the nipple.



New or bloody discharge.



Change in the size, shape or colour.



Thickened hard skin that feels different than the rest of the breast tissue.



A new lump.