

What Is DenseBreast-info.org?

DenseBreast-info.org is an information resource focused on providing breast density information to both patients and health care providers. This medically sourced educational tool is the collaborative effort of breast imaging experts and medical reviewers to help guide discussion of the question:

“Have dense breasts...now what?”

What is breast density?
Why does it matter?
What should be done next?

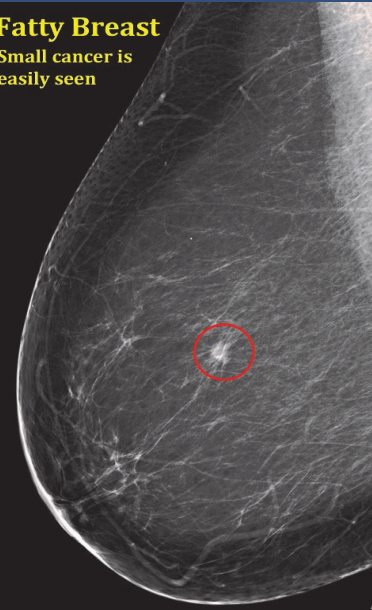


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THIS MATERIAL IS NOT INTENDED AS MEDICAL ADVICE. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR HEALTH, PLEASE CONTACT A QUALIFIED MEDICAL PRACTITIONER.

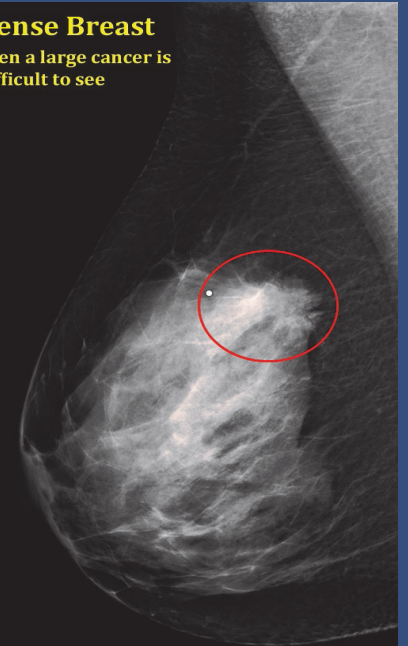
Fatty Breast

Small cancer is easily seen



Dense Breast

Even a large cancer is difficult to see



Cancer on a mammogram in a fatty breast vs. a dense breast

Images courtesy of Dr. Wendie Berg

GET **SMART** ABOUT BEING DENSE™

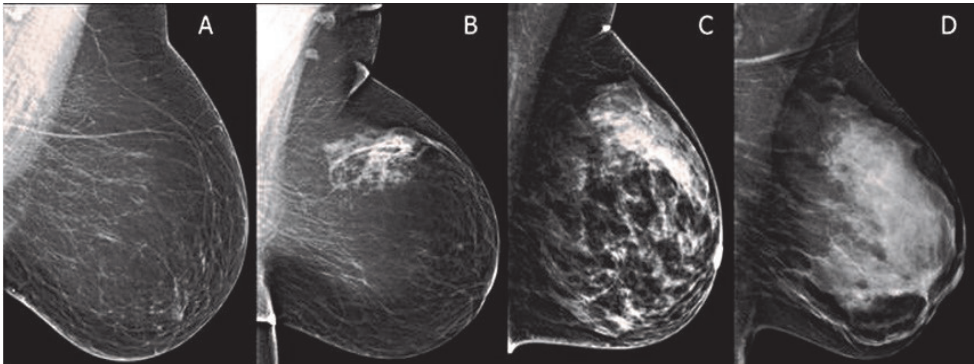
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An Education Coalition

Dense Breast Fast Facts

1. Breast density is determined through a woman's mammogram and described as one of four categories:

(A) Fatty; (B) Scattered fibroglandular density; (C) Heterogeneously dense; or (D) Extremely dense



Breasts which are (C) Heterogeneously dense; or (D) Extremely dense are considered “dense breasts.”

2. Dense breasts are normal. 40% of women age 40 and over have dense breasts.

3. Although normal, dense breast tissue is a risk factor for developing breast cancer and the denser the breast, the greater the risk.

4. Mammography remains the standard screening test for breast cancer and is proven to reduce deaths due to breast cancer. However, in dense breasts, cancers can be hidden on mammography and may go undetected until they are larger and more likely to have spread.

5. Other screening tests, such as ultrasound or MRI, when added to mammography, substantially increase the detection of early stage breast cancer in women with dense breasts.

I have dense breasts...now what?

SHOULD YOU HAVE A REGULAR DIGITAL (2D) MAMMOGRAM OR A DIGITAL WITH TOMOSYNTHESIS (3D) MAMMOGRAM?

- 3D mammograms improve the chance of finding cancer in most breasts though cancer detection may not be improved in extremely dense breasts. For women with dense breasts, 3D reduces the chance of having to return for additional imaging for a finding that turns out not to be cancer.

WHAT ABOUT MORE SCREENING AFTER YOUR MAMMOGRAM?

- Regardless of breast density, women at high risk for breast cancer (because of known disease-causing genetic variations, prior chest radiation therapy, or who have a strong family history of breast cancer), should have a screening MRI in addition to yearly mammography. If you have screening MRI, there is no added benefit from screening ultrasound.
- For women with extremely dense breasts, if not at high risk, screening ultrasound is appropriate each year in addition to mammography/tomosynthesis.
- For women with heterogeneously dense breasts, if not at high risk, screening ultrasound can be considered each year, in addition to mammography/tomosynthesis.

For more information about your personal risk factors and what screening tools may be right for you, visit the For Patients tab at www.DenseBreast-info.org. There is a printable *Breast Cancer Risk Checklist* to complete and discuss with your health care provider and an easy to follow patient table, *Is My Mammogram Enough?*