



My Action Plan

- I will learn my family history and update my history during health care visits.
- I will talk with my doctor about my breast density, my breast health and any other concerns I have.
- I will get my mammogram and any other screenings my doctor suggests.
- I will try to make healthy lifestyle changes.

What can I do to lower my risk for Breast Cancer?

There is no way to fully remove a woman's risk (chance) for breast cancer. But there are some lifestyle changes that can help *lower* risk.

- Keep a healthy weight. Obese women have a higher risk for breast cancer.
- Exercise regularly
- Don't smoke
- Limit the alcohol you drink
- Get regular screening mammograms starting at age 40, or sooner if you are high risk.

Work with your health care provider to find out if your family history or your medical history raises your risk. Be sure to let your health care provider know if you have any changes in your breast that are new and of concern like:

- a mass
- pain in one spot that does not go away
- sudden nipple discharge
- changes to the way the nipple looks

Where can I get more information?



For an appointment call
1-888-369-2427 (888-FOX-CHASE)
or visit www.foxchase.org

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BREAST DENSITY

Know the Facts...

www.foxchase.org



What are Dense Breasts?

Breast tissue is a normal mix of fibrous and glandular tissue, and fatty tissue. The fatty tissue looks dark gray on a mammogram (x-ray of the breast). The fibroglandular tissue looks white. Both types of tissue are normal, and we all have a varied mix of the two types. Dense breasts have more fibrous and glandular tissue than fatty tissue.

Are Dense Breasts a risk factor for breast cancer?

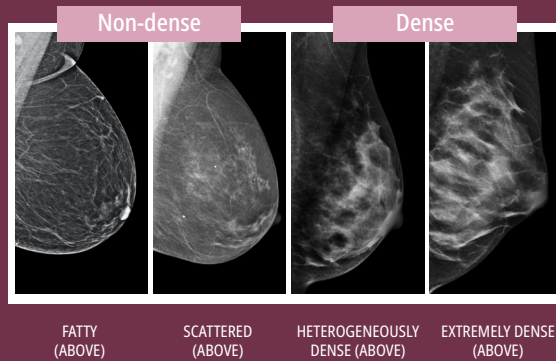
Having dense breast tissue is common, mainly in younger women and in women taking hormone therapy for menopause. Women with dense breast tissue have a higher risk of breast cancer than those with mostly fatty or less dense breast tissue. Some studies suggest that women with extremely dense breast tissue have a risk of breast cancer that is four times higher than the risk of women who have fatty breasts (very low breast density).

Do Dense Breasts affect my mammogram?

Having dense breast tissue may make it harder to see small breast cancers or other changes in the breast on a mammogram.

How do I know if I have Dense breasts?

We can only see dense breast tissue on a mammogram. When the breast radiologist (a doctor) reads your mammogram, they look at the pattern of fibroglandular (white tissue) and fatty tissue (dark gray tissue) in your breast.



They put each breast imaging study into one of four density categories or groups, based on the pattern of the tissue.

The four groups are:

Not Dense

- 1 **Almost entirely fatty tissue** – Breasts in this group have mainly fatty tissue. About 1 out of 10 women have almost all fatty breast tissue.
- 2 **Scattered areas of fibroglandular tissue** – Breasts in this group are made up mostly of non-dense tissue with some areas of dense tissue. About 4 out of 10 women fall into this group.

Dense

- 3 **Heterogeneously dense tissue** – Breasts in this group have some areas of non-dense tissue, but most of the breast tissue is dense. These areas may hide small masses. About 4 out of 10 women fall into this group.
- 4 **Extremely dense tissue** – Breasts in this group have mainly dense fibroglandular tissue. This makes mammograms harder to read. About 1 out of 10 women have extremely dense breast tissue.

Are there other screening tests for women with Dense Breasts?

Getting a mammogram each year is important for all women, no matter what their breast density. But there are other screening tests to add to mammography for women who have dense breasts. These tests are most often suggested for women who have heterogeneously dense or extremely dense breast tissue (the two dense breast groups).

Screening Whole Breast Ultrasound is a test that uses ultrasound of both breasts to look for cancers. Cancers are often “darker” than the fibroglandular tissue around them at ultrasound. This can make them easier to see. If your breast radiologist sees something on the ultrasound that needs more testing, they will ask you to return for an exam of that area of the breast.

Breast MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) uses a magnetic field and radiofrequency waves along with injected contrast (dye) to look for lesions that take up the contrast. These may be cancer. Both ultrasound and MRI can show lesions that appear suspicious and will need a biopsy (tissue sample). This is the only way to know for sure if it is cancer.

Molecular Breast Imaging (MBI) is a nuclear medicine test that can help look for cancers in dense breasts. A small amount of radiotracer liquid is injected into a vein. You then have a special imaging of the breasts that is like a mammogram. During the MBI exam, the radiologist looks for places in the breast that take up the liquid. These places may point to a hidden cancer.

What questions should I ask my doctor if I have Dense Breasts?

Ask your doctor or breast radiologist about your breast density and talk about your medical history and your family's medical history. If you have dense breasts, more screening for breast cancer may be helpful. Also, if your family or personal medical history raises your risk for breast cancer, the Risk Assessment Program at the Fox Chase Cancer Center may help you learn more about your total risk. Women with greater than 20% lifetime risk of breast cancer can often get added yearly screenings by switching between mammograms and breast MRI using contrast (one test every six months).