

# Dense Breast Tissue

## Breast Tissue

Each breast is made of glandular, connective or fatty tissue.

- **glandular:** This is tissue that makes milk for women who are breastfeeding.
- **connective:** This is tissue that supports other tissues and joins them together. It provides support in the breast.
- **fatty:** This is tissue that stores fat.

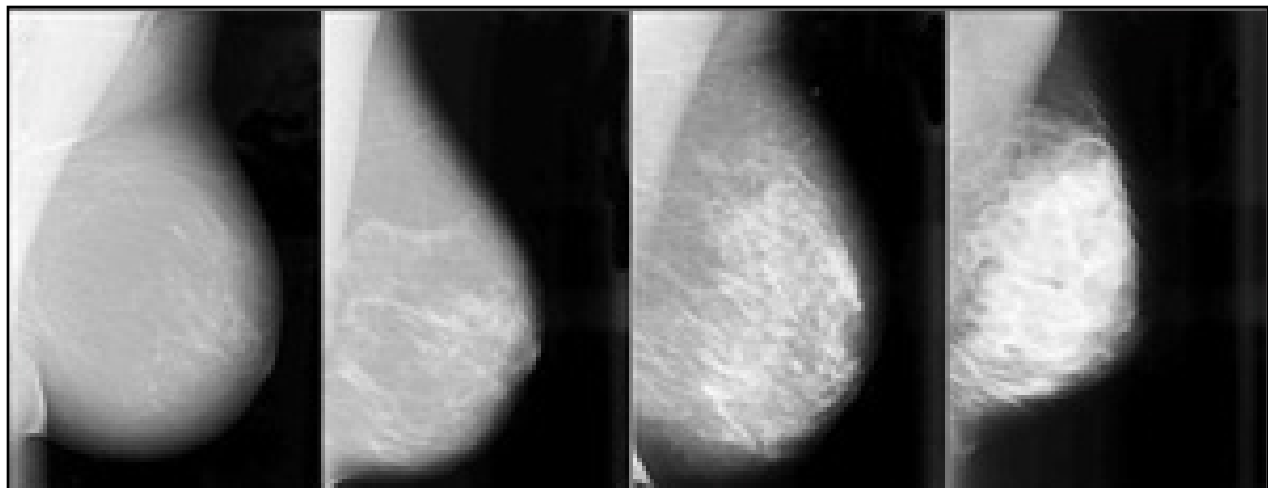
## Dense Breast Tissue

Dense breasts have more glandular and connective tissue without much fatty tissue.

There are four categories of breast density (see breast images below):

- **A:** Breast tissue that is almost entirely fatty.
- **B:** Less than half of breast tissue is made of glandular and connective tissue.
- **C:** More than half of breast tissue is made of glandular and connective tissue.
- **D:** Breast tissue is made of almost entirely glandular and connective tissue.

Dense breast tissue is common.



**A: Fatty**

**B: Scattered**

**C: Heterogeneously  
dense**

**D: Extremely dense**

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**(over)**

## Breast Cancer Risk

Dense breast tissue appears white on a mammogram. Abnormal tissue (cancerous and not cancerous) also appears white.

Dense breast tissue may make it more difficult for a radiologist to detect cancer on a mammogram.

## Breast Density Results

You will receive a letter with your mammogram results. The letter will tell you if you have dense breast tissue. This letter is to raise your awareness and to help you talk with your health care provider about your mammogram results and future exams or tests.

## What You Can Do

Allina Health recommends that you and your health care provider together determine when mammograms are right for you.

Allina Health's mammogram screening guidelines are based on the 2015 American Cancer Society recommendations:

- **Age 25:** Have a risk assessment for breast cancer with your health care provider.
- **Ages 40 to 44:** Should consider having a mammogram every year with your decision informed by a shared decision making process with your health care provider. During this process, they will explain the benefits and harms of screening.

- **Ages 45 to 54:** Have a mammogram every year.
- **Age 55 and older:** Have a mammogram every year or transition to having one every 2 years. Continue to have mammograms as long as your health is good.

Talk with your health care provider. Although a mammogram is the main way to detect breast cancer, you and your health care provider can decide if an additional exam, such as an MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) or ultrasound, would be right for you.

**Some information adapted from the National Cancer Institute.**