

What does it mean to have dense breasts?

If you have dense breasts, you may need more screening in addition to your mammogram.



What is breast density?

Breast density measures the different types of tissue in your breasts. Women who have more fibrous and glandular tissue than fat tissue have dense breasts.

Breast density matters because:

Breast cancers and other masses may be hidden in dense breast tissue. Both dense breast tissue and tumors appear white on mammograms. A screening ultrasound can help ensure tumors are visible.

Women with dense breasts are at slightly higher risk for getting breast cancer.

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS

MD Anderson
Cancer Center

Making Cancer History®

Are dense breasts common?

Yes, around **40% of women** in the United States have dense breast tissue.

It's more common if you are:



Under 50 years old

Almost half of women with dense breasts are ages 40-49.



Pregnant or breastfeeding



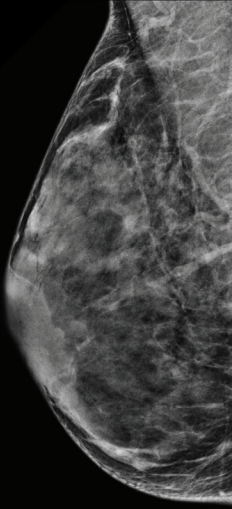
A lower body weight



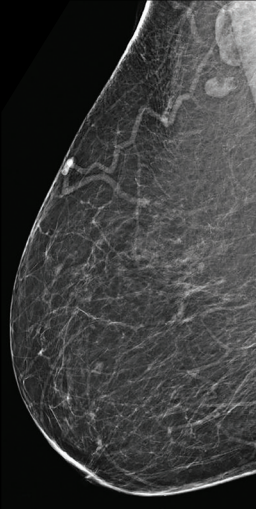
Taking hormone replacement therapy



Your mammogram will show whether your breast tissue is dense.



Dense



Not dense

If your mammogram shows you have dense breasts, you may be referred for a screening ultrasound.

Unlike a mammogram, the ultrasound is done lying down and a scanner is placed on top of your breast. Sound waves create images that show more information. Together with your mammogram, these tests may provide a more complete evaluation of your breasts.

If you've been told you have dense breast tissue, ask your doctor about additional testing.