

Breast Density Notification in Nova Scotia

Starting in October 2019, the Nova Scotia Breast Screening Program will begin a phased roll out to reporting breast density in screening mammogram results across Nova Scotia.

WHAT IS BREAST DENSITY?

Breasts are made up of “non-dense breast tissue” (also called fatty tissue) and “dense breast tissue”, which includes milk glands, ducts and supportive tissue. Some women think that because their breasts are firm, they are dense but, breast density is not related to a woman’s breast size or firmness.

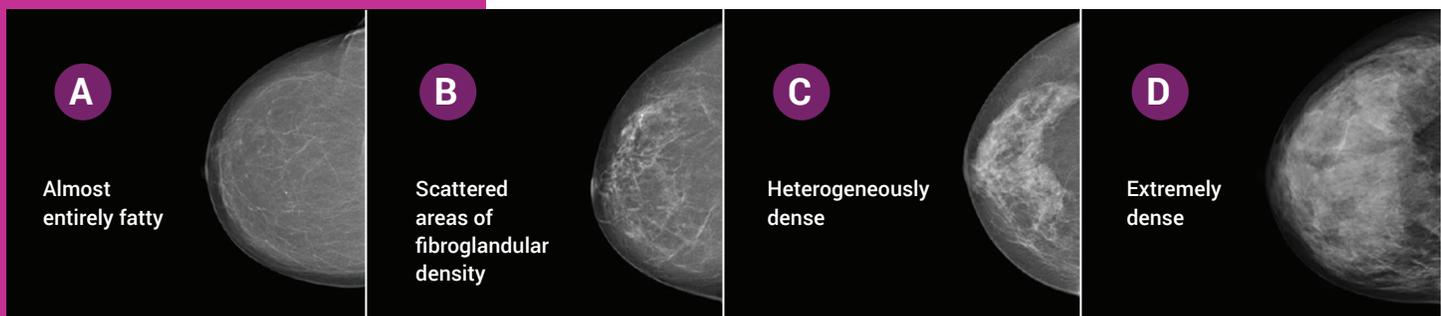
WHO IS LIKELY TO HAVE DENSE BREASTS?

Younger women tend to have denser breasts than older women because younger women have higher levels of the hormone estrogen. As women grow older, their breasts often become more fatty and less dense.

HOW IS BREAST DENSITY DETERMINED AND REPORTED?

A screening mammogram is needed to measure a woman’s breast density. Breast density cannot be felt by a physical examination.

Breast density is reported according to the American College of Radiology Breast Imaging Reporting and Data System (BI-RADS) standard.



There are four
categories of breast
density, shown above
as they appear on a
mammogram.

Category A: Almost entirely fatty means that the breasts are almost entirely made up of fatty tissue.

Category B: Scattered areas of fibroglandular density means that there is some dense tissue in the breasts, but the majority of the breast tissue is fatty.

Category C: Heterogeneously dense means that more of the breast is made up of dense tissue.

Category D: Extremely dense means that nearly all of the breast tissue is dense.

NOVA
SCOTIA
**BREAST
SCREENING
PROGRAM**

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For more information
about the Nova Scotia
Breast Screening Program,
please contact us.

Call (902) 473-3960 or
toll free 1-800-565-0548.

breastscreening.nshealth.ca

WHY IS BREAST DENSITY IMPORTANT?

On a screening mammogram, cancers may be hidden by dense breast tissue because both appear white.

Women with more breast density have a greater chance of developing breast cancer. However, having even the highest breast density does not mean that a woman will develop breast cancer. There are other risk factors for breast cancer. Being a woman is the biggest risk factor for breast cancer. Increasing age is also a risk factor.

IMPORTANCE OF REGULAR SCREENING MAMMOGRAMS

Many women who do not have dense breasts can develop breast cancer. It is important to get a screening mammogram regularly, as this is the only test proven to find cancer when it is small, allowing more treatment options and better chance of recovery.

KNOW YOUR BREASTS

Women should know what is normal for their breasts. They should contact their primary care provider right away if they notice any unusual changes in their breasts like a new lump, nipple discharge, or changes to the skin such as redness or dimpling, even if they have recently had a normal mammogram.

HOW TO REQUEST BREAST DENSITY CATEGORY FOR SCREENING MAMMOGRAMS DONE BEFORE OCTOBER 1, 2019?

Please contact the Nova Scotia Breast Screening Program at 902-473-3960 or 1-800-565-0548 for more information.

