

McLeod

Breast Health Center

Understanding Breast Density

What is Breast Density?

Breast density refers to the amount of glandular and connective tissue compared to fat in the breast. It is determined through mammography and categorized into four levels:

1. **Category (A) Mostly Fatty:** The breast is composed mostly of fat, making it easier to detect abnormalities on mammograms.
2. **Category (B) Scattered Fibroglandular Density:** There are scattered areas of fibroglandular tissue throughout the breast. These areas appear white on a mammogram which may make it more difficult for the radiologist to assess the breast for abnormalities.
3. **Category (C) Heterogeneously Dense:** There are areas of dense tissue, which may make mammogram interpretation more challenging. It may also slightly increase the risk of breast cancer and make mammogram interpretation more challenging.
4. **Category (D) Extremely Dense:** The breast has a high proportion of dense tissue, which can significantly obscure mammogram images and increase the risk of breast cancer.

Why is Breast Density Important?

1. **Breast Cancer Risk:** Women with dense breasts have a slightly higher risk of developing breast cancer compared to those with lower breast density. Dense breast tissue can also make it more difficult to detect small tumors on mammograms.
2. **Mammogram Interpretation:** Dense breast tissue appears white on mammograms, similar to tumors, making it harder to distinguish between normal tissue and potential abnormalities.

What You Should Know:

1. **Common and Normal:** Breast density is common and not abnormal. Many women have dense breasts, and it is not something you can feel by touch.
2. **Importance of Screening:** Regardless of breast density, regular mammograms are crucial for breast cancer screening. However, if you have dense breasts, your healthcare provider may recommend additional screening methods such as breast MRI or ultrasound.
3. **Know Your Risk:** Talk to your healthcare provider about your individual risk factors for breast cancer. Factors such as family history, personal medical history, and lifestyle habits can influence your risk. *Referral to the McLeod High-Risk Breast Clinic can be made by your healthcare provider or by calling 843-777-4444.*

4. **Stay Informed:** Stay up-to-date on breast health guidelines and recommendations. Ask questions during your appointments and advocate for your health.

Next Steps:

1. **Talk to Your Doctor:** If you have questions or concerns about your breast density, don't hesitate to discuss them with your healthcare provider or contact the McLeod Breast Health Team at (843) 777-4444.
2. **Follow Screening Recommendations:** Follow your healthcare provider's and the Breast Health Team recommendations for breast cancer screening based on your breast density and individual risk factors.
3. **Stay Proactive:** Stay proactive about your breast health by being aware of your breast health and attending annual routine screenings as recommended.

McLeod Breast Health Center

McLeod Breast Health Navigator

(843) 777-5418

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Breast Imaging Department

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McLeod Patient Access Service Center

(843) 777-2095 option #1