

# Breast Density

## What it is. Why it matters.

### Breast Density — What does it mean?

Breasts are made of fat and glandular breast tissue. Some women have more fat than glandular breast tissue while others have more glandular tissue than fat. When there is more glandular tissue, the breast is considered dense. On a mammogram, dense tissue appears white. Since masses of lumps also appear white on a mammogram, a suspicious lump may be masked by the dense breast tissue.

Dense breast tissue is also linked with an increase in the risk of developing breast cancer. Women with extremely dense breast tissue have a 4-6 times greater risk of developing breast cancer than women with fatty breasts.

### Do I have dense breasts?

The radiologist who reads your mammogram will determine your breast density based on the four-level scale above. Your doctor should be able to tell you where you fall on the breast density scale. Over one-third of women age 50 and older and over half of those under age 50 have dense breasts (categorized as heterogeneously dense or extremely dense).

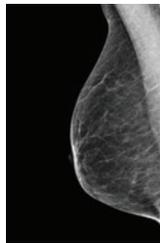
### I have dense breasts. Now what?

A mammogram can detect cancer even if you have dense breasts. However, in some cases, a different type of mammogram may be considered.

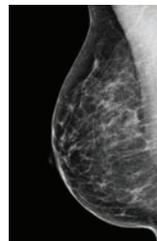


All breasts are not the same. Some are fatty, some are dense and some are a mix. About 40% of women have dense breast tissue.

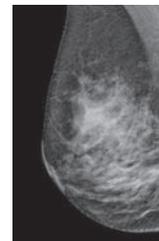
Breast Density is determined by the radiologist who reads your mammogram and classifies the density into one of four categories.



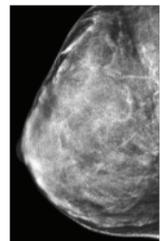
Fatty



Scattered areas of fibroglandular density



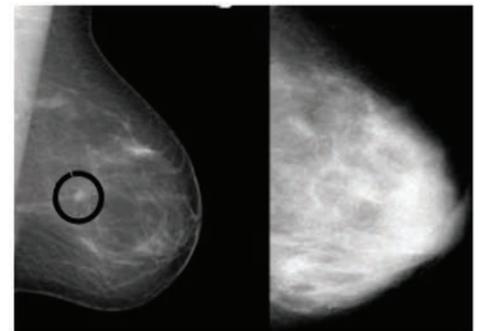
Heterogeneously dense



Extremely dense

### Seeing is believing.

The first image on the left is a mammogram of a fatty breast with an easily detected small, white tumor in the center of the breast. The image on the right is a mammogram of an extremely dense breast. Because dense breasts are made up of more fibrous and glandular tissue, detecting this same tumor—with the use of mammography alone—presents much more of a challenge.



*Mammograms matter...  
every woman, every year!*

Mammograms remain the gold standard for all women, regardless of breast density. However, some women may consider other types of imaging in addition to mammography. Ask your doctor which option is best for you.

### Additional Breast Exam Options

#### 3D Mammography (Digital Breast Tomosynthesis)

Also called “tomo,” this innovative technology creates multiple thin images of the breast. These “slices” make overlapping normal tissues less likely to hide cancers, allowing radiologists to view breast structures more clearly and characterize findings more accurately.

Invision Sally Jobe is proud to have pioneered this powerful imaging technique in Colorado.

#### Screening Breast Ultrasound

Ultrasound involves using sound waves to see through tissues and displays lesions differently than mammography. It is often performed to examine specific areas of the breast when there is a concern, such as pain or a lump. Screening breast ultrasound (SBU) is intended to scan the entire breast, not just specific regions, which is why it is useful as a whole breast screening—versus diagnostic—tool.

Mammography can mask small cancers due to the dense tissue. SBU provides radiologists the ability to look through the dense tissue in order to find small invasive cancers.

#### Breast MRI Screening

MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) is very sensitive to changes in tissue. As a result, MRI can find cancers that mammograms can miss. Breast MRI screening is typically recommended for women who have additional risk factors for breast cancer, such as a family history of the disease or a specific mutation in genes such as BRCA1 or BRCA2. Your doctor or a specialist, like a genetic counselor, can review your risk factors in detail to determine if breast MRI screening might be appropriate for you.

### How do I decide which option is best for me?

Talk with your physician about your breast density and your desire to learn more about additional options to detect breast cancer early, if not prevent it altogether. You may also contact us to ask questions via phone or to schedule a visit with our board-certified genetic counselors, who can provide you with a detailed breast cancer risk assessment. At Invision Sally Jobe, these visits are billed to insurance and most patients are only responsible for an out-of-pocket copayment.

#### Insurance Coverage and Financial Concerns

Exams are most often covered by insurance, as long as they are clinically indicated. Please contact your insurance carrier if you have questions. We recognize that financial concerns may prevent some patients from seeking necessary healthcare exams. We pride ourselves on being sympathetic and flexible. We offer a dedicated financial navigator, as well as assistance with pre-authorization and any necessary insurance appeals after the exam is completed. If you have financial concerns or need additional guidance on how to speak with your insurance company about your exam, please call our Patient Care Coordination line.

#### Locations

Invision Sally Jobe offers convenient locations throughout the Denver metro area. Visit [www.invisionsallyjobe.com](http://www.invisionsallyjobe.com) to find the location nearest you.

#### Why Invision Sally Jobe?

Every Invision Sally Jobe breast imaging site is a National Quality Measures for Breast Centers® (NQMBC) Certified Quality Breast Center of Excellence™. This designation is awarded to facilities that consistently demonstrate excellence in patient care and adherence to the highest clinical quality standards. Invision Sally Jobe is the only breast network in Denver metro area to earn this distinction.

Invision Sally Jobe is also an American College of Radiology (ACR) Breast Imaging Center of Excellence and fully certified by the FDA.

For more information about our commitment to quality, please visit [www.invisionsallyjobe.com](http://www.invisionsallyjobe.com).

**To schedule an appointment, call 720.493.3700.**

For other inquiries, call our Patient Care Coordination line at 720.493.3459 or email [pcc@riaco.com](mailto:pcc@riaco.com).

To learn more about mammograms and breast density, visit [www.mammography-saves-lives.org](http://www.mammography-saves-lives.org).

**[www.InvisionSallyJobe.com](http://www.InvisionSallyJobe.com)**



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