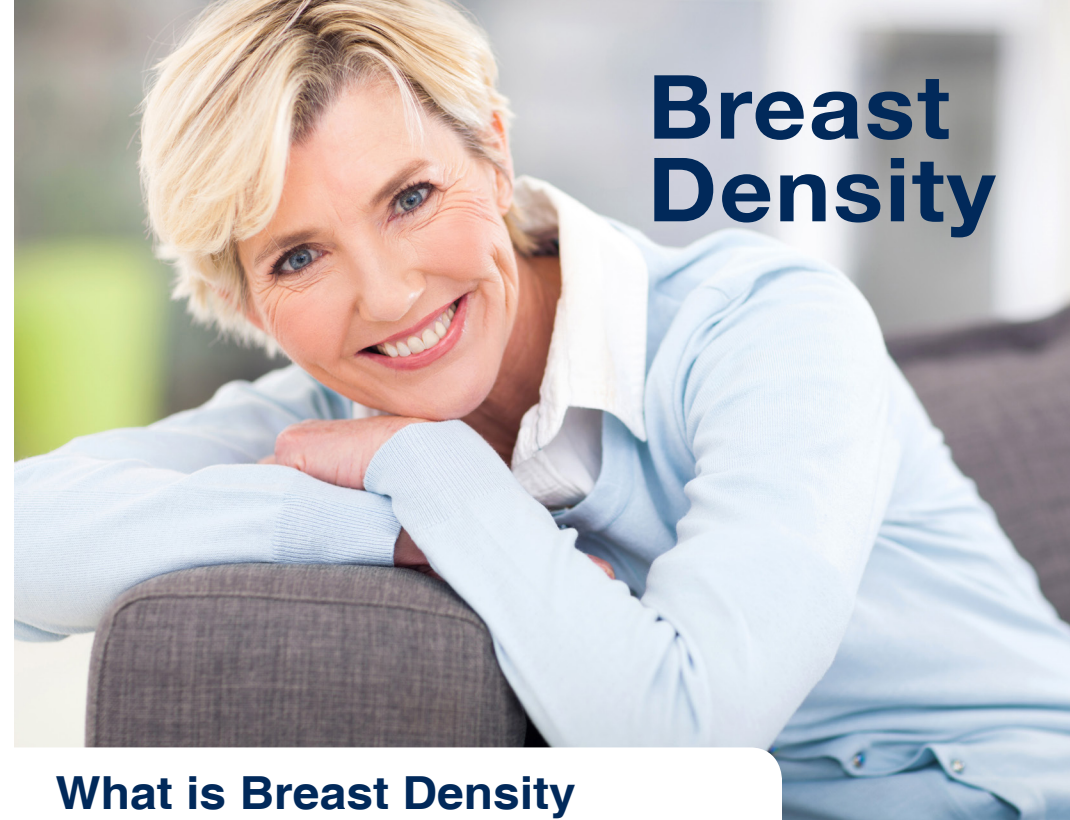


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giving the highest quality  
care to each individual.  
We promise to help you  
live life to the fullest  
capacity.”  
— GRHS Staff



# Breast Density

## Resources

The American College of Radiology, Society of Breast Imaging and American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, among others, recommend that all women have yearly mammograms beginning at age 40. Women at high risk may benefit from starting earlier.

For more information on breast cancer screening, visit [RadiologyInfo.org](http://RadiologyInfo.org) or [MammographySavesLives.org](http://MammographySavesLives.org).



[acr.org](http://acr.org) | 1-800-227-5463 |    


## What is Breast Density and why is it important?

Breasts are made up of a mixture of fibrous and glandular tissue and fatty tissue. Your breasts are considered dense if you have a lot of fibrous or glandular tissue but not much fat. Density may decrease with age, but there is little, if any, change in most women.

### How do I know if I have dense breasts?

Breast density is determined by the radiologist who reads your mammogram. There are four categories of mammographic density. The radiologist assigns each mammogram to one of the categories. Your doctor should be able to tell you whether you have dense breasts based on where you fall on the density scale. (See next page.)

For more information, please contact us:

 10 Fourth Ave SE  
Glenwood, MN 56334

 Radiology Department  
Direct Number: 320.634.2273

 [glacialridge.org](http://glacialridge.org)



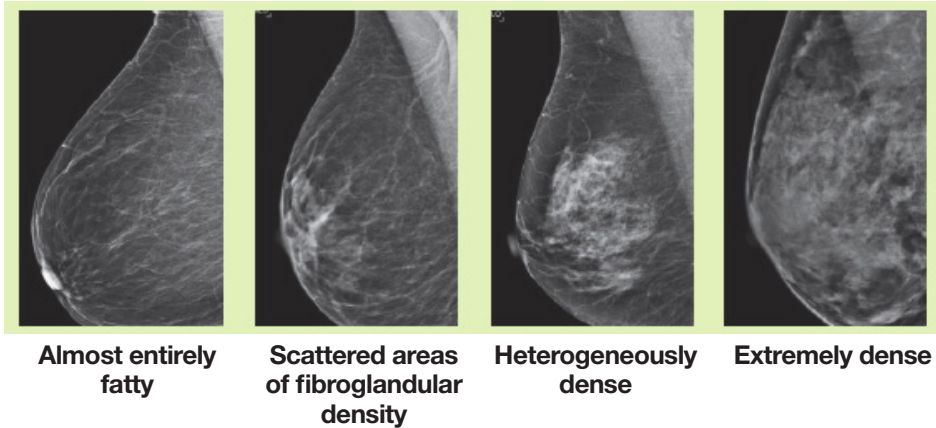
GLACIAL RIDGE  
HEALTH SYSTEM  
*heartfelt care®*

“Not sure if you have dense breasts?  
Ask your doctor which breast cancer  
screening options are **right for you.**”



## Breast Density in the U.S.

Radiologists classify breast density using a 4-level density scale:



## Why is breast density important?

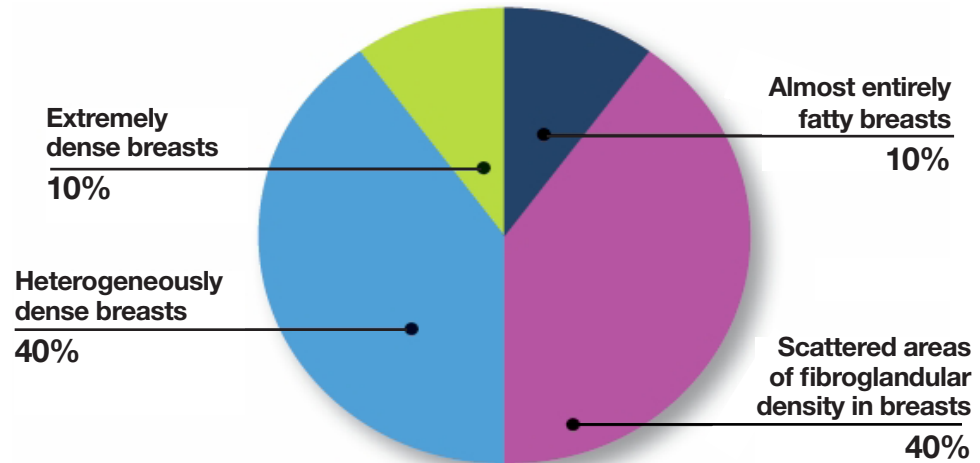
Having dense breast tissue may increase your risk of getting breast cancer. Dense breasts also make it more difficult for doctors to spot cancer on mammograms. Dense tissue appears white on a mammogram. Lumps, both benign and cancerous, also appear white. So, mammograms can be less accurate in women with dense breasts.

## What tests are recommended for dense breasts?

In breasts that are dense, cancer can be hard to see on a mammogram. Digital breast tomosynthesis, also called 3D mammography, provides images of the breast in “slices” from many different angles making some abnormalities easier to see. 3D mammography increases the number of cancers seen without additional testing. Ultrasound and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) can help find cancers that can’t be seen on a mammogram. However, both MRI and ultrasound show more findings that are not cancer, which can result in added testing.

## Breast Density in the U.S.

- 10% of women have almost entirely fatty breasts
- 10% have extremely dense breasts
- 80% are classified into one of the two middle categories.



## What should I do if I have dense breasts? What if I don't?

If you have dense breasts, please talk to your doctor. Together, you can decide which, if any, additional screening exams are right for you. If your breasts are not dense, other factors may still place you at increased risk for breast cancer — including a family history of the disease, previous chest radiation treatment for cancer and previous breast biopsies that show you are high risk. Talk to your doctor and discuss your history. Even if you are at low risk, and have entirely fatty breasts, you should still get an annual mammogram starting at age 40.

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