

Different Tests for Different Breasts



Mammograms may miss cancer in dense breasts. Discussing additional testing with your doctor may help protect your health.

You can't tell by touch, you can't tell by sight. 40%¹ of American women have dense breasts. This can increase a woman's risk of breast cancer by 4-6 times.² If you have dense breasts, it means that your breasts are filled with more tissue than fat. Dense tissue can hide cancer on a mammogram and may require additional testing.

A patient's story

In 2003, Nancy M. Cappello, Ph.D didn't think she was at high risk for breast cancer. She was fit, healthy, got regular mammograms and had no close relatives who'd had the disease. But in 2004, Cappello's physician felt something unusual in her right breast and sent her for a mammogram, which again revealed nothing. She went for an ultrasound—which detected a large tumor including cancer metastases to 13 lymph nodes - an advanced stage IIIc breast cancer within weeks of her 'normal' mammography report.

"I was shocked," says Cappello. Her physician informed her that she had dense breasts putting her at increased risk for cancer in addition to a greater likelihood of her dense tissue hiding cancer on mammogram. Today, Cappello's reports show no evidence of cancer, however because of her late stage diagnosis, she remains at risk of dying prematurely from the disease. She was stunned that, while most radiologists report density to a women's referring physician, women were not being routinely informed about the limitations of mammography in dense breasts. As a result of her experience, Dr. Cappello founded Are You Dense, Inc. a nationwide advocacy group dedicated to informing women about breast density. Her foundation has successfully helped enact Breast Density Notification Laws in 19 states which require doctors to inform women about their breast density.

What every woman needs to know

Do you know if you have dense breasts? It could save your life.

- Get a mammography screening exam
- Find out your breast density
- Know your options for additional tests, if you have dense breasts, learn your options for additional screening. Pass this information along, every woman needs to know.

Automated Breast Ultrasound (ABUS) from GE Healthcare is the only FDA approved technology for screening dense breasts. It was specifically developed to help doctors find cancers hidden in dense breast tissue, which may be missed by mammography. It is proven to find 35.7%³ more cancer than mammography alone.

ABUS does not use radiation, injections or compression like a mammogram. In this relatively comfortable exam, patients lie in their back while the ABUS system uses high frequency sound waves to make detailed images of breast tissue. Cancer appears black on ultrasound images, which may make cancer easier to see.

If you have dense breasts, ask your doctor if ABUS imaging would benefit you.

To find out more about breast density and breast cancer risk factors visit areyoudense.org

Proud Sponsor of Diagnosis Anxiety: The Working Mother Breast Screening Report

1) Tabár L, et al. Swedish two county trial: impact of mammographic screening on breast cancer. 2011;260:658-63.
2) Boyd, et al, NEJM Jan 2007. 3) FDA PMA P110006 summary of safety and effectiveness



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