

## Mayo Clinic Minute: What does it mean to have dense breasts?

Video

Audio

	Starting at age 40, women are encouraged to get their annual mammogram. Sometimes you may get an unexpected result like being told you have dense breasts.
Christine Klassen, M.D. General Internal Medicine Mayo Clinic	"Breast density is a radiologic term, and it's specifically referring to how the breast tissue appears on a mammogram."
	The breast tissue is made up of fibrous tissue, glandular tissue and fatty tissue. Dr. Christine Klassen, a Mayo Clinic Breast Cancer Clinic physician, says dense breasts may make screening more difficult.
	"The dense breast tissue on a mammogram is when we see a lot of that glandular and supportive tissue, and not so much of the fatty tissues."
	Breast density is assigned one of four levels: A, B and C, and D, which is extremely dense.
	"The higher density group has about four times the risk of a cancer, compared to the lower density group."
	Annual mammograms remain an important screening tool. Dr. Klassen says additional testing may help.
	"We do think that there's some benefit to getting the 3D mammogram or the mammogram with tomosynthesis, which helps the radiologists scan through the field of the breast and get a better sense for what's a true mass."
	For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm DeeDee Stiepan.