

Mayo Clinic Minute: What does a dense breast tissue diagnosis mean?

Intro: A recent [Food and Drug Administration](#) rule requires healthcare providers to notify people if they have dense breast tissue. [Studies](#) have shown that dense breast tissue can make it more difficult to detect breast cancer early.

[Dr. Kristin Robinson](#), a Mayo Clinic breast radiologist, says women with dense breast tissue are at a slightly increased risk of developing breast cancer compared to women without, and that's why early detection is so important.

Video	Audio
	"About 50% of women have dense breast tissue."
	Dr. Kristin Robinson says you can't tell by looking at a woman whether she has dense breasts or not. She says people with dense breasts have less fat and more glandular and connective tissue in their breasts.
Kristin Robinson, M.D. Radiology Mayo Clinic	"When we see a woman's mammogram, that dense tissue, that fibroglandular tissue looks white, whereas the fat looks dark or like a black color. So, when we're looking at a mammogram, the more white tissue we see, the more dense we considered her to be."
	Dr. Robinson says it's difficult to detect cancer in dense breasts because breast cancer and dense tissue appear white on a mammogram.
	"Our sensitivity or our ability to detect breast cancer goes down in women who have dense breast tissue for that reason."
	The radiologist encourages women with dense breast tissue to have supplemental screenings.
	"Whole-breast screening ultrasound, MRI, molecular breast imaging and contrast-enhanced mammography."

	For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Sonya Goins.