

Breast Density Notification in New Brunswick

Across New Brunswick, radiologists are now reporting breast density using standardized Breast Imaging Reporting and Data System (BI-RADS) categories. Breast density results are included in mammography reports and the screening letters sent to women by the NB Breast Cancer Screening Program following routine screening.

The following are the BI-RADS categories used to describe the amount of dense breast tissue:

BI-RADS Category A: almost entirely fatty	BI-RADS Category B: scattered areas of fibro glandular density	BI-RADS Category C: heterogeneously dense	BI-RADS Category D: extremely dense
Low Breast Density		High Breast Density	

Source: American College of Radiology (ACR) Breast Imaging Reporting and Data System- BI-RADS Atlas 5th Edition

What is Breast Density?

- Breast density is a measure used to describe the proportion of different tissues that make up women's breasts. Breasts are made up of fatty (non-dense tissue) and glandular tissue (dense breast tissue), which includes milk glands, ducts and supportive tissue.
- **Dense breast tissue is common and is not considered abnormal.**
- Breast density can only be measured by mammogram. Breast density cannot be detected by a physical exam and it is not related to breast size.
- A low breast density result (BI-RADS Category A or B) means you are at average risk for developing breast cancer.
- The higher the breast density result (BI-RADS Category C or D), the harder it can be to see or detect abnormalities on a mammogram. People with high breast density **may** have an increased risk of developing breast cancer.
- Breast density is assessed and reported by the radiologist as part of the mammogram report.

Regular Breast Cancer Screening

- Screening mammography is the optimal tool for screening average risk women aged 50-74.
- Routine screening should be done every two to three years with mammography if the results are normal.
- Women should know what is normal for their breasts and discuss their risk factors for breast cancer (i.e.: personal or family history of cancer, obesity, age, hormone replacement, breast density, gene mutations, etc) or discuss any changes in their breasts with their physician or nurse practitioner.
- Breast Cancer and Your Risk brochure is available at <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/chronic-diseases/breast-cancer-your-risk.html>.

How can you request your mammogram or any other medical test results?

- Contact your physician or nurse practitioner to discuss your mammography results, including breast density.
- Contact the health records department at Vitalité <https://www.vitalitenb.ca/en/patients/information-requests> (1-888-472-2220) or Horizon Health Network <https://en.horizonnb.ca/home/facilities-and-services/services/other-services/personal-health-records.aspx> (506-623-5500).

For more information about breast cancer screening, visit www.gnb.ca/health.