

## WHAT ARE BREAST CALCIFICATIONS?

Calcifications are tiny deposits of calcium that form in breast tissue. Calcium from your diet does not cause breast calcifications. A number of things can cause calcium deposits in your breast. Possible causes include:

- Normal aging
- Inflammation
- Past trauma to the area
- Masses in the breast: both cancer and not cancer

## ABOUT CALCIUM DEPOSITS

- They do not cause pain.
- They are too small to be felt during a routine breast exam.
- They are common, especially after menopause.
- They usually are not cancer.
- Certain types of breast calcifications may suggest breast cancer.

For more information please  
call your provider.

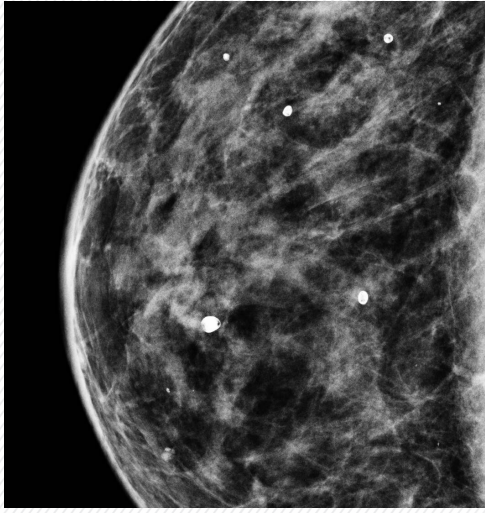
[edith.sanfordhealth.org](http://edith.sanfordhealth.org)

# Breast Calcifications

[ We are strong. We are Edith. ]

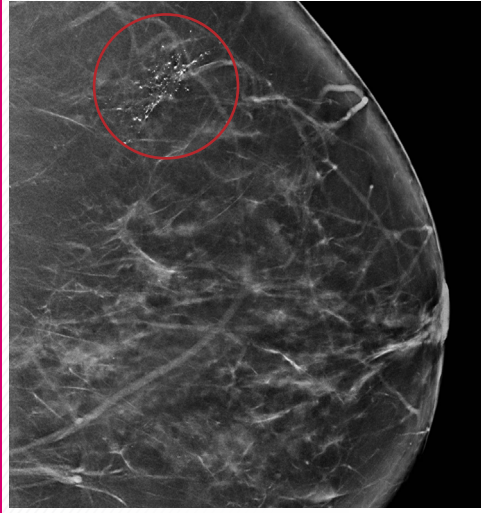


Two types of breast calcifications are usually found with a mammogram.



### Macrocalcifications

- Look like large white dots on a mammogram
- Are often spread randomly within the breast
- Are found in about half of women over age 50 and in one out of ten women under age 50
- Are not thought to be related to cancer, so more testing is rarely needed



### Microcalcifications

- Look like grains of salt on a mammogram
- Are usually not cancer, but if they appear in certain patterns and/or are clustered together, they can be a sign of early breast cancer
- May need magnified views to look at the calcifications more closely. May need follow-up tests.

### How are breast calcifications managed?

Follow-up care depends on the type of calcifications seen.

#### Benign

These are not cancer and are thought to be harmless. No further testing or treatment is needed.

#### Probably benign

These have a very small (less than 1 out of 50) risk of being cancer. Often, they will be rechecked every 6 months until shown to be stable. If no changes are seen, your doctor will most likely suggest you go back to routine, yearly mammograms.

#### Suspicious

Sometimes it is hard to tell if microcalcifications indicate a problem. In these cases, more testing may be needed. Your doctor may suggest that you have a biopsy. During a biopsy, a small amount of breast tissue with the calcium deposits is removed. It will be sent to the lab and checked for cancer cells.