



# The State of Breast Cancer Screening in Canada

Provincial  
Performance Tracker

March 2026

**dbc**

DENSE BREASTS CANADA

# Canadian women should not face a postal code lottery in breast cancer detection.

Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in Canadian women. Early detection saves lives. Yet access to evidence-aligned screening depends heavily on where a woman lives.

Dense Breasts Canada has evaluated all provinces and territories across seven key screening practices that reflect modern, equitable breast cancer detection.

## How We Scored Provinces

Each province was evaluated on whether it provides:

- 1) Self-referral starting at age 40
- 2) Annual screening ages 40–49
- 3) Clear breast density notification
- 4) Supplemental screening for women with dense breasts
- 5) Annual screening for women with very dense breasts
- 6) Self-referral after age 74
- 7) A high-risk screening program

Each province receives a score out of 7.

These measures reflect current scientific evidence, evolving international standards, and practices already implemented in parts of Canada.

## The Results

Some provinces are leading.  
Some are improving.  
Some are falling behind.

No province currently meets all seven evidence-aligned practices.

This means inequities persist across the country.

## Why This Matters

- Breast cancer in women in their 40s is not rare.
- Dense breast tissue increases both cancer risk and the chance cancer will be missed on mammography.
- Women over 74 continue to live long, healthy lives and can still benefit from screening.
- Early detection reduces the need for aggressive treatment and lowers system costs.

When screening policy lags behind evidence, women pay the price.

## What Happens Next

This tracker will be updated as change occurs.

We believe:

- Transparency drives improvement.
- Measurement drives accountability.
- Public awareness drives change.

Provincial governments have made progress. Many have recently lowered the screening age. That progress deserves recognition. But progress must continue.

## Call to Action

We encourage Canadians to:

- Review your province's score
- Share it with your elected representative
- Ask what steps are being taken to close remaining gaps

Equitable breast screening should not depend on geography.



## Nova Scotia

### Does Nova Scotia:

- 1) Allow women to self-refer for mammograms starting at age 40?  
Yes
- 2) Offer annual mammograms, ages 40-49?  
Yes
- 3) Tell all women their breast density after a screening mammogram?  
Yes
- 4) Offer annual mammograms for women with Category D density?  
Yes
- 5) Allow women to self-refer for mammograms after age 74?  
Yes
- 6) Offer additional screening to women with dense breasts?  
No
- 7) Offer high-risk program?  
Yes

Rating: 6/7

### Kudos:

- ✓ Women can self-refer, starting at 40.
- ✓ Women, ages 40-49 can screen annually.
- ✓ The breast density category is mailed to women in their result letter.
- ✓ Women can continue to self-refer for screening after age 74.
- ✓ Annual mammograms for women with Category D density.
- ✓ Have a high-risk program

### Changes still needed:

- Access to screening ultrasound for women with dense breasts.

**Advocacy update:** Advocacy continues for access to screening ultrasound.

Rating:  
6/7



# Yukon Territory

## Does Yukon Territory:

1) Allow women to self-refer for mammograms starting at age 40?

Yes

2) Offer annual mammograms, ages 40-49?

Yes

3) Tell all women their breast density after a screening mammogram?

Yes

4) Offer annual mammograms for women with Category D density?

Yes

5) Offer self-referral for a mammogram after age 74?

Yes

6) Offer additional screening to women with dense breasts?

No

7) Offer high risk program?

No

Rating: 5/7

## Kudos:

- ✓ Women can self-refer, starting at 40.
- ✓ Women, ages 40-49, can screen annually.
- ✓ Women with Category D density are offered annual mammograms.
- ✓ Women can continue to self-refer for screening after age 74.

## Changes still needed:

- Better access to screening ultrasound for women with dense breasts.
- High-risk program

Rating:  
5/7



## Newfoundland and Labrador

### Does Newfoundland and Labrador:

1) Allow women to self-refer for mammograms starting at age 40?

Yes

2) Offer annual mammograms, ages 40-49?

Yes

3) Tell all women their breast density after a screening mammogram?

Yes

4) Offer annual mammograms for women with Category D density?

Yes

5) Allow women to self-refer for mammograms after age 74?

Yes

6) Offer additional screening to women with dense breasts?

No

7) Offer high risk program?

No

Rating: 5/7

### Kudos:

- Women with Category D density are offered annual mammograms.
- Women can continue to self-refer for screening after age 74.

### Changes still needed:

- Better access to screening ultrasound for women with dense breasts.
- Date needed for implementation of density notification.
- High-risk program

Rating:  
5/7



## Northwest Territories

### Does Northwest Territories:

1) Offer self-referral for a mammogram starting at 40?

**No, but women can begin to self-refer at 45. Women can also self-refer 40-44 after their first requisition.**

2) Offer annual mammograms, ages 40-49?

**Yes, but only ages 40-44.**

3) Tell all women their breast density after a screening mammogram?

**Yes**

4) Offer annual mammograms for women with Category D density?

**Yes. Screening ultrasound is also offered for Category D.**

5) Allow women to self-refer for mammograms after age 74?

**Yes**

6) Offer additional screening to women with dense breasts?

**Yes**

7) Offer high risk program?

**No**

**Rating: 5/7**

### Kudos:

- ✓ Women need a requisition for the first screen in the 40s, but can self-refer thereafter.
- ✓ The breast density category is mailed in the results letter.
- ✓ Women with Category D density are offered annual mammograms and have access to ultrasound.

### Changes still needed:

- Self-referral for screening, starting at 40 instead of 45.
- High-risk program

**Rating:  
5/7**



## Ontario

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### Does Ontario:

1) Offer self-referral for a mammogram starting at 40?

Yes

2) Offer annual mammograms, ages 40-49?

No

3) Tell all women their breast density after a screening mammogram?

Yes

4) Offer annual mammograms for women with Category D density?

Yes

5) Offer self-referral for a mammogram after age 74?

No

6) Offer additional screening to women with dense breasts?

Yes

7) Offer high risk program?

Yes

Rating: 5/7

### Kudos:

- ✓ Self-referral for screening, starting at 40.
- ✓ Women with Category D density can also choose between MRI every two years and ultrasound every year, depending on capacity.

### Changes still needed:

- Self-referral for screening after age 74

Rating:  
5/7



## Prince Edward Island

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### Does Prince Edward Island:

1) Allow women to self-refer for mammograms starting at age 40?

Yes

2) Offer annual mammograms, ages 40-49?

Yes

3) Tell all women their breast density after a screening mammogram?

Yes

4) Offer annual mammograms for women with Category D density?

Yes

5) Allow women to self-refer for mammograms after age 74?

No

6) Offer additional screening to women with dense breasts?

No

7) Offer high-risk program?

No

Rating: 4/7

### Kudos:

- ✓ Women can self-refer, starting at 40.
- ✓ Women, ages 40-49, can screen annually.
- ✓ The breast density category, A, B, C or D, is mailed to women in their result letter.
- ✓ Women with Category D density are offered annual mammograms.

### Changes still needed:

- Self-referral for screening after age 74.
- Better access to screening ultrasound for women with dense breasts.
- High-risk program

**Advocacy update:** In 2019, the government committed to screening ultrasound for women with dense breasts. DBC and opposition MLAs continue to advocate for implementation.

Rating:  
4/7



## British Columbia

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### Does British Columbia:

1) Allow women to self-refer for mammograms starting at age 40?

Yes

2) Offer annual mammograms, ages 40-49?

No

3) Tell all women their breast density after a screening mammogram?

Yes

4) Offer annual mammograms for women with Category D density?

No

5) Allow women to self-refer for mammograms after age 74?

Yes

6) Offer additional screening to women with dense breasts?

Yes

7) Offer high risk program?

No

**Rating: 4/7**

### Kudos:

- ✓ Women can self-refer for a mammogram, starting at age 40.
- ✓ The breast density category is mailed to women in their result letter.
- ✓ Women can continue to self-refer for screening after age 74.
- ✓ Women with Category C or D density can access screening ultrasound with a requisition.

### Changes still needed:

- Annual screening ages 40-49; women can only self-refer every 22 months.
- Annual mammograms for women with Category D density.
- High-risk program

**Advocacy update:** Advocacy continues for increased access to screening ultrasound.

Rating:  
4/7



## Alberta

### Does Alberta:

- 1) Allow women to self-refer for mammograms starting at age 40?  
**No, but women can begin to self-refer at 45. Women can also self-refer 40-44 after their first requisition.**
- 2) Offer annual mammograms, ages 40-49?  
**Yes**
- 3) Tell all women their breast density after a screening mammogram?  
**Yes**
- 4) Offer annual mammograms for women with Category D density?  
**No**
- 5) Allow women to self-refer for mammograms after age 74?  
**Yes**
- 6) Offer additional screening to women with dense breasts?  
**Yes**
- 7) Offer high risk program?  
**\*No, working on it.**

Rating: 4/7

### Kudos:

- ✓ Women can self-refer after their first screen ages 40-45 or self-refer after age 45.
- ✓ Women can screen annually 40-49.
- ✓ The breast density category is mailed to women in their result letter.
- ✓ Women with Category C or D density can access screening ultrasound with a requisition.

### Changes still needed:

- Self-referral for screening at 40
- Annual mammograms for women with Category D density.
- High-risk program\*

**Advocacy Update:** Advocacy continues for self-referral at age 40.

Rating:  
4/7



## Saskatchewan

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### Does Saskatchewan:

- 1) Allow women to self-refer for mammograms starting at age 40?  
**No. Currently the age to self-refer is 43 and in June 2026 it will drop to 40.**
- 2) Offer annual mammograms, ages 40-49?  
**No**
- 3) Tell all women their breast density after a screening mammogram?  
**Yes**
- 4) Offer annual mammograms for women with Category D density?  
**Yes**
- 5) Allow women to self-refer for mammograms after age 74?  
**Yes**
- 6) Offer additional screening to women with dense breasts?  
**Yes**
- 7) Offer high risk program?  
**No**

**Rating: 4/7**

### Kudos:

- ✓ Women with Category D density are offered annual mammograms.
- ✓ Women can continue to self-refer for screening after age 74.

### Changes still needed:

- Self-referral for screening at 40.
- Better access to screening ultrasound for women with dense breasts.
- High-risk program

**Rating:**  
**4/7**



## Manitoba

### Does Manitoba:

- 1) Allow women to self-refer for mammograms starting at age 40?  
**No. Currently the age to self-refer is 45. Then in December 2026 it will drop to 40.**
- 2) Offer annual mammograms, ages 40-49?  
**No**
- 3) Tell all women their breast density after a screening mammogram?  
**Yes**
- 4) Offer annual mammograms for women with Category D density?  
**No**
- 5) Allow women to self-refer for mammograms after age 74?  
**Yes**
- 6) Offer additional screening to women with dense breasts?  
**No**
- 7) Offer high risk program?  
**No**

**Rating: 2/7**

### Kudos:

- ✓ The breast density category is mailed to women in their results letter.
- ✓ Women can continue to self-refer after 74.

### Changes still needed:

- Self-referral for screening, starting at 40
- Annual mammograms for women with Category D density.
- Better access to screening ultrasound for women with dense breasts.
- High-risk program

**Advocacy update:** Much change is needed in Manitoba and Dense Breasts Canada is actively advocating.

**Rating:  
2/7**



## New Brunswick

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### Does New Brunswick:

1) Offer self-referral for a mammogram starting at 40?

Yes

2) Offer annual mammograms, ages 40-49?

No

3) Tell all women their breast density after a screening mammogram?

Yes

4) Offer annual mammograms for women with Category D density?

No

5) Offer self-referral for a mammogram after age 74?

No

6) Offer additional screening to women with dense breasts?

No

7) Offer high risk program?

No

Rating: 2/7

### Kudos:

- ✓ The breast density category is mailed to women in their results letter.
- ✓ Women can self-refer for a mammogram, starting at age 40

### Changes still needed:

- Annual mammograms for women with Category D density.
- Self-referral for screening after age 74
- Better access to ultrasound for women with dense breasts
- High-risk program

**Advocacy update:** DBC is advocating for supplemental screening.

Rating:  
2/7



## Quebec

### Does Quebec:

- 1) Offer self-referral for a mammogram starting at 40?  
No
- 2) Offer annual mammograms, ages 40-49?  
No
- 3) Tell all women their breast density after a screening mammogram?  
Yes
- 4) Offer annual mammograms for women with Category D density?  
No
- 5) Offer self-referral for a mammogram after age 74?  
No
- 6) Offer additional screening to women with dense breasts?  
No
- 7) Offer high risk program?  
No

Rating: 1/7

Kudos: None

### Still needed:

- Self-referral for screening, starting at 40
- All women need to be directly informed of their breast density in the mail. Currently, the information is in the online health portal.
- Annual mammograms for women with Category D density.
- Self-referral for screening after age 69
- Better access to ultrasound for women with dense breasts
- High-risk program

**Advocacy update:** There are continuous advocacy efforts with the screening program and political representatives in Quebec with regards to screening at 40 and density notification.

Rating:  
1/7

# Breast Screening Practices in Canada

Province/ Territory	At age 40 can self-refer for a mammogram	Age 40 to 49 self-referral in progress	Breast density category mailed to all women having a screening mammogram	Annual mammogram for category D density	After age 74 can self-refer (others need req.)	Offer additional screening to women with dense breasts	Offer a high-risk program
BC	Yes		Yes		Yes	Yes	Hereditary High Risk Program
NS	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
PEI	Yes		Yes	Yes			
YT	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes		
AB	After 1st screen or age 45		Yes		Yes	Yes	In Progress
MB	Age 45	Age 40 Dec. 2026	Yes		Yes		
NB	Yes		Yes				
SK	Age 43	Age 40 June 2026	Online Portal	Yes	Yes	Yes	
ON	Yes		Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes
NL	Yes		Online Portal	Yes	Yes		
QC		Under Review	Online Portal			Cat. D with Family History	
NWT	After 1st screen or age 45		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	

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January 2026

Check out our self-advocacy guide and for more information on breast screening in Canada, visit [densebreastscanada.ca](https://densebreastscanada.ca) and [mybreastscreening.ca](https://mybreastscreening.ca)

