

Breast Calcifications

Calcifications are calcium deposits found within breast tissue. They are extremely common and are usually associated with benign conditions caused by aging. However, radiologists carefully analyze all calcifications seen on mammograms because there is a rare chance a calcification could be a very early sign of breast cancer.

I have calcifications. What happens next?

Your radiologist will order a diagnostic mammogram to evaluate the size, shape and distribution of calcifications to determine if they are benign or malignant.

There are three types of calcifications:

- ▼ **Benign**—These are not a concern and can be monitored with regular routine mammograms.
- ▼ **Probably benign**—These calcifications are more than 98% likely to be benign. You will have a follow-up mammogram six months after this diagnosis. If there is no change after a full year, you will resume your regular schedule of a yearly mammogram.
- ▼ **Suspicious**—This third category means that the calcification could be either benign or cancerous and requires a biopsy. A biopsy is when a small amount of breast tissue is removed and is then analyzed under a microscope. There are two kinds of biopsies.

Stereotactic needle biopsy: Uses a computer to locate and obtain a sample of the precise center of the calcifications. It uses X-rays taken from multiple angles and a special biopsy needle. Stereotactic biopsies can be performed in an outpatient setting and are less invasive than a surgical biopsy.

Surgical biopsy: Performed in an operating room with local or general anesthesia. It usually requires a pre-operative procedure, where a radiologist places a needle into the calcifications. The needle is replaced by a thin wire that the surgeon uses to guide the incision and remove calcifications for testing.



Did my diet cause these breast calcifications?

This is a very common concern. No, there are no known links between calcifications and dietary calcium intake, other dietary factors or postmenopausal hormone replacement therapy. Most of the time, calcifications occur as the breast changes with age.

Remember, if you've been diagnosed with calcifications, the chances of them being malignant are statistically very rare. The best way to maintain breast health is staying on top of your mammograms.



[BSWHealth.com/BreastImaging](https://www.BSWHealth.com/BreastImaging)

Photography may include models or actors and may not represent actual patients. The information provided herein is considered educational and should not be used during any medical emergency or for the diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. A licensed medical professional should be consulted for diagnosis and treatment of any and all medical conditions. Call 911 for all medical emergencies. Physicians provide clinical services as members of the medical staff at one of Baylor Scott & White Health's subsidiary, community or affiliated medical centers and do not provide clinical services as employees or agents of those medical centers or Baylor Scott & White Health. ©2023 Baylor Scott & White Health. 34-ALL-766130-CJTMammoEduc_LH