

## 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.

[edithsanford.org](http://edithsanford.org)

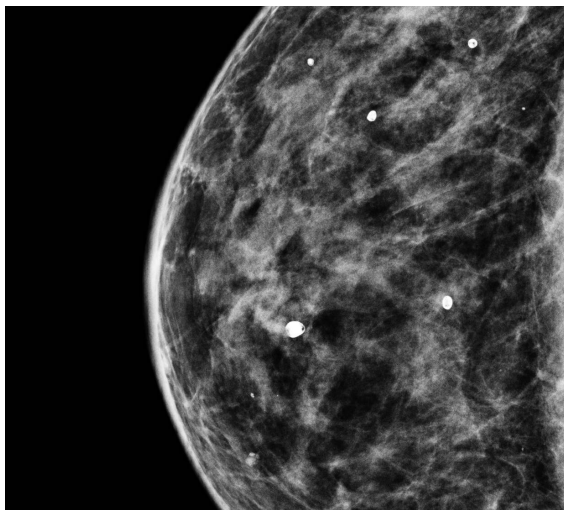
Copyright©2019Sanford. All rights reserved.  
The information provided is for educational purposes only,  
is not to be used as the basis for medical treatment, and  
is not a substitute for professional medical advice.

011004-00223 PE 10/22



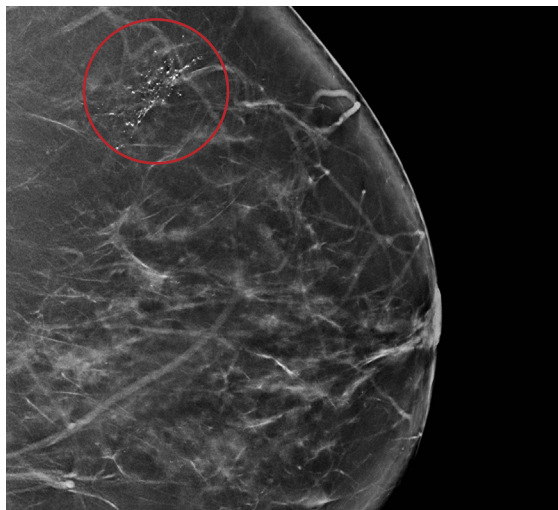
## Breast Calcifications

# 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.