

**THE NATUROPATHIC  
PERSPECTIVE  
BY SHELBY WORTS, BSc, ND**

**BREAST TISSUE DENSITY  
-in the news-**

Do you have dense breast tissue?

Last month *The New England Journal of Medicine* published a report from an extensive study done at Princess Margaret Hospital in Toronto. The findings: women with a higher proportion of dense tissue in the breasts have an up to five-fold greater risk of developing breast cancer than women with low density tissue.

Breast tissue density is evaluated and quantified most commonly through mammography and should be included in your most recent, and next, report. Visually on a mammogram fat cells appear dark while all other tissues (ligaments, milk ducts, etc.) present as white. Tumours also appear as white. Consequently tumour cells can be more difficult to visualize... but this is not the only issue presenting in the study. Women with denser breast tissue are also at a greater risk of developing breast cancer... not simply concealing it during routine screening.

Breast tissue density can be determined by genetic, hormonal and dietary factors.

Genetics

An extensive 2002 study on twins determined that additive genetic factors contribute to ~63% of breast density.

Hormonal

Estrogens, prolactin and IGF-1 are linked to increased breast density.

Progesterone and melatonin are associated with decreased density and increased protection.

Dietary factors

Encourage lower-density breast tissue with a diet low in total and saturated fats, low in cholesterol and animal proteins while high in fibre as well as orange & red vegetables.

**A naturopathic doctor can help by:**

- assessing your dietary and environmental contributors to breast density
- personalizing a treatment plan to support healthy breasts and other tissues
- hearing your concerns and finding answers to your questions
- recommending appropriate natural therapies for treating your menopausal symptoms

Reference and recommended reading:

[The Complete Natural Medicine Guide to Breast Cancer](#), S.D.Kaur, ND

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**Emma's Update:**

When Emma set out on this adventure, May 2006, she had a general body shape/size in her mind as well as weight she may like to be. What she wasn't expecting is how good she would feel about herself in the low-150 lb range! She feels strong, healthy and attractive. She enjoys her reflection in the mirror, compliments from others and how well her clothing fits her body. As mentioned last month... she especially loves how foods (sugar!) no longer have control over her.

Emma is looking forward to a year of focusing on the maintenance of her physical health via retaining her new eating habits and working out more frequently to tone her body for strength, endurance and injury-prevention.

Weight: 151 lbs

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