

Be Breast Aware

Know your breasts.

Know how they look and feel.



When you are familiar with your breasts and how they change through time, you are more likely to notice breast changes that seem unusual to you.

There is no right or wrong way to check your breasts. Find a way that is comfortable for you.

It's good to ask questions

If you have any questions, please call the Breast Health Clinic.

We are here to support you!

Breast Calcifications

Breast Health Clinics
Monday to Friday

Jim Pattison Outpatient Care and
Surgery Centre, Surrey 604-582-4563

8:00AM to 4:00PM

Abbotsford Regional Hospital,
Abbotsford 604-851-4806

8:00AM to 3:00PM



www.fraserhealth.ca

This information does not replace the advice
given to you by your healthcare provider.

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What are breast calcifications?

Breast calcifications (sounds like *kal-seh-feh-kay-shuns*) are tiny spots of calcium found anywhere in the breast tissue. The calcifications are so small you won't feel them. They appear as white spots or flecks on a mammogram (breast x-ray). Sometimes, they are so small they look like dust.

What causes breast calcifications?

Calcifications usually form naturally as you age. As you age calcium leaves your bones and goes to other places in your body like your breasts.

They can also form if you:

- bumped your breast and damaged the tissue
- had a breast infection at some time
- had a previous breast lump or cyst
- had breast surgery or a breast implant

The calcifications have nothing to do with what you eat or drink. You cannot get them from drinking too much milk or taking calcium supplements.



How are these calcifications treated?

Breast calcifications are very common and usually harmless. However, sometimes they are an early sign of breast cancer or what is called 'pre-cancer' (tissue that has changed but is not yet cancer). Because of this, the doctor will do more tests to see what kind of calcification you have.

You have another mammogram which is more detailed than a screening mammogram. You may have an ultrasound test as well.

If the calcium is sprinkled all over your breast, they are most likely not cancer (called 'benign' - sounds like *bee-nine*). You would then have another mammogram in 6 months to check that nothing has changed. If they remain unchanged, they do not need to be removed and will not cause you any harm.

If the calcium appears in a pattern or in a tight group, they could be pre-cancer or cancer cells. The only way to tell for sure is to do a biopsy (sounds like *bye-op-see*).

A biopsy is when the doctor takes a small sample of tissue from your breast. The sample is sent to be examined under a microscope

If you need a biopsy, we will:

- Give you information about this test.
- Tell you how to prepare this test.
- Give you a date and time for the biopsy.
- Give you a date and time to find out the results a week after your biopsy.

If the biopsy tells us the calcifications are an early sign of breast cancer, the doctor will talk with you about what it means and what the next steps are for treatment. An option might be to remove the calcifications. This can usually be done as day surgery (no need to stay in the hospital overnight).