

ASK JACKIE



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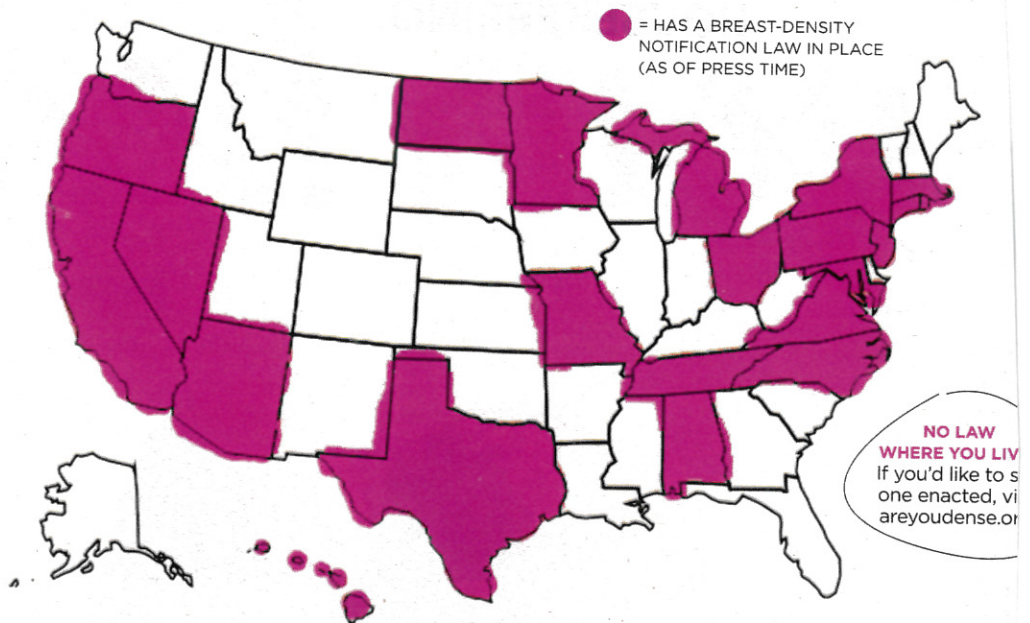


## I'M NOT INTO WATER. WHAT ELSE CAN I DRINK?

Enjoy a cup or two of unsweetened coffee (yes, coffee counts!) or tea in the morning, then sip fruit-infused sparkling water all afternoon and evening. You can add fresh or frozen fruit to seltzer, or buy the bottled version (my fave: Hint Fizz water in cherry, \$18 for 12 bottles). Finally, eat more fruits and veggies. Strawberries, spinach, peppers and melon can deliver up to a half-cup of H<sub>2</sub>O per serving. The amount of fluid you need depends on your weight, the outside temperature, how much you exercise and the state of your health. But as a general rule, most of us need a minimum of eight cups daily, and those who work out vigorously or sweat a lot should drink even more.

### HAVE A QUESTION?

E-mail [askjackie@goodhousekeeping.com](mailto:askjackie@goodhousekeeping.com).



### MEDICAL UPDATE

# DON'T BE DENSE ABOUT DENSE BREASTS

If your boobs have more fibrous tissue than fat, they're considered dense — and tough to read on a mammo. New legislation aims to make sure you know that

Find your state on the map above. Is it pink? If so, screening facilities where you live are now required by law to send a notification when a mammogram reveals that a patient's breasts are dense. The letters begin something like this: *Your mammogram shows that your breast tissue is dense. Dense breast tissue is very common and is not abnormal. However, dense breast tissue can make it harder to find cancer on a mammogram and may also be associated with an increased risk of breast cancer.*

### HERE'S WHAT THAT REALLY MEANS:

On a mammogram, fat appears see-through, while dense tissue is solid, says Marisa C. Weiss, M.D., founder of [breastcancer.org](http://breastcancer.org). Since tumors also appear white, dense tissue makes finding growths "like looking for a snowball in a blizzard," she says. About 40% of women ages 40 to 74 have dense breasts, and for the 10% of women with breasts in the densest category, the risk of breast cancer is double that of women with average breasts.

So now you've got the info. But if you've received one of these notices, you're probably wondering what to do about it. The truth is, there's no perfect screening method for dense

breasts, but there are measures you can take to up your odds of detecting any cancer.

### START HERE: Get your density profile.

If you live in a state *without* a notification law, ask your radiologist whether your breasts are dense. (Knowledge is power!)

### Opt for 2-D and 3-D digital mammography.

Norwegian research found that the 3-D method improved cancer detection in dense breasts. Most health insurances don't yet cover 3-D mammos, but the out-of-pocket cost isn't terrible—usually under \$100, says Therese Bevers, M.D., medical director of the Cancer Prevention Center at MD Anderson Cancer Center. Ask if your facility has new technology that allows a computer to reconstruct the 2-D images from the 3-D images, lessening your radiation exposure.

**Schedule strategically.** Your breasts are the least dense a few days after your period, so that's a good time to get screened.

**Talk about your family history.** If density is just one of several risk factors, your doctor may suggest an ultrasound or an MRI—MRIs have higher detection rates than mammos, but they aren't right for everyone because they're pricey and may elicit false positives.

—Marisa Cohen