

## Genetic cancer risk testing

About 1 out of 10 breast cancers are hereditary. Depending on your family history or other features of your cancer, your health care provider might refer you for hereditary genetic testing to learn more about your cancer. A genetic counselor or trained provider will speak to you about the results. Tests results may be used to guide treatment planning. Genetic testing is done collecting blood or saliva (spitting into a cup or a cheek swab). The goal is to look for gene mutations inherited from your biological parents called germline mutations.

Some mutations can put you at risk for more than one type of cancer. You can pass these genes on to your children. Also, other blood relatives might carry these mutations. Tell your care team if there is a family history of cancer.

### **BRCA tests**

Everyone has *BRCA* genes. Normal *BRCA* genes help to prevent tumor growth. They help fix damaged cells and help cells grow normally. *BRCA* mutations put you at risk for more than one type of cancer. Mutations in *BRCA1* or *BRCA2* increase the risk of breast, ovarian, prostate, colorectal, pancreatic, and melanoma skin cancers. Mutated *BRCA* genes can also affect how well some treatments work. These tests might be repeated to help determine the best treatment.

### What is your family health history?

Some cancers and other diseases run in families—those who are related to you through genes passed down from biological parent to child. This information is called a family health history. Ask blood relatives about their health issues like heart disease, cancer, and diabetes, and at what age they were diagnosed. For relatives who were diagnosed with cancer, ask them (or other relatives if they are no longer living) what type of cancer they had, if they died from the cancer, and at what age the cancer was diagnosed.

Start by asking your parents, siblings, and children. Next, talk to half-siblings, aunts and uncles, nieces and nephews, grandparents, and grandchildren.

Write down what you learn about your family history and share with your health care provider.

Some of the questions to ask include:

How old were you when each of these diseases and health conditions was diagnosed?

What is our family's ancestry—from what countries did our ancestors originate?