

Genes and Inherited Breast Cancer Risk

Every cell in your body contains genetic material, or genes. Scientists have found several genes that are key in the development of breast cancer (i.e., BRCA1 and BRCA2). Sometimes, people are born with a defect in one of these genes, an inherited mutation that can be passed on to children. Inheriting a mutated breast cancer gene may increase a woman's risk of breast or ovarian cancer. However, only 5-10 percent of all breast cancers are caused by those inherited mutations.

Answers to these questions will help you to understand the relationship between genes and inherited breast cancer risk.

Q: Do you recommend genetic counseling/testing? If yes, why?
How is the test performed?

A:

Q: What are the benefits and risks of genetic testing?

A:

Q: What are the issues our family needs to think about when considering genetic testing? (i.e., emotional impact, what it will mean for other family members, what we will do with the information)

A:

Q: How much does genetic testing cost? Does my insurance cover it?

A:

Q: What are the confidentiality issues?

A:

Q: What are my options if I am at a higher risk for breast cancer?
Or if I am found to have a mutation in a breast cancer gene?

A:

Q: Are my family members (i.e., daughter, sister, mother) at a higher risk for breast cancer? What precautions do you recommend?
Where can we/they go for breast cancer risk assessment and preventive therapy?

A:

Q: What does it mean if I am told that my test was non-informative?
What are my options if this occurs?

A: