Inherited Genes and Breast Cancer Risk

Every cell in your body contains genes. Sometimes, people are born with an error in one of these genes called a mutation. Some gene mutations are linked to breast cancer (i.e., BRCA1 and BRCA2). A mutated gene can be inherited from either the mother or father. This inherited mutation may increase a woman's risk of breast or ovarian cancer. However, only 5-10 percent of all breast cancers in the U.S. are due to inherited genetic mutations. Answers to these questions can help you talk with your doctor or a genetic counselor.

Q: How do I know if I have an inherited genetic mutation? Do you recommend genetic counseling?

A:

Questions to ask the genetic counselor

Q: What can I learn from genetic testing?

A:

Q: What do I need to think about before I get genetic testing? What does our family need to know about genetic testing (i.e., emotional impact) and what will we do with this information?

A:

Q: How much does genetic testing cost? Does insurance pay for it?
A:

Q: Who will see my results? Will my results be kept private?
A:

Q: When should I have genetic testing done?
A:

Q: If I have a mutation, what can I do?
A:

Q: If I have a mutation, does it mean I will get breast cancer? Will my family members (i.e., daughter, son, sister, mother) get breast cancer? What can we do? Where can we go for testing and counseling?
A:

Q: If I do not have a mutation, what does that mean about my risk of breast cancer?
A:

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For more information on breast health or breast cancer, please call our breast care helpline (1-877-465-6636) or visit our website. Susan G. Komen does not provide medical advice.

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