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 your mother or father. This inherited mutation may increase your 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 may help you talk with your doctor or a genetic counselor about your risk of breast cancer.

Q: How do I know if I have an inherited genetic mutation? Do you recommend I speak to a genetic counselor or get genetic testing? If so, why?
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 and how will we use this information?
A: 

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

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

Q: Who will see my results? Will my results be kept private?
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? Where can we go for counseling and testing?
A:

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

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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