

BRCA Guide: Navigating Your Journey

A guide to *BRCA* mutations and their influence on cancer from beBRCAware



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WHAT IS BRCA?

Everyone is born with *BRCA1* and *BRCA2* genes. Normally, these genes ensure that cancerous cells don't grow and multiply. However, these genes can be mutated, causing their function to change. Mutated *BRCA* genes are less likely to have control over cancerous cells, leading to an increased risk of ovarian, breast, prostate, and pancreatic cancer.

Ovarian cancer can be deadly among women and those with a *BRCA* mutation are at an increased risk of developing this disease. If you have a *BRCA1* mutation, you have a 39% chance of developing ovarian cancer by age 70. If you have a *BRCA2* mutation, you have an 11% chance of developing ovarian cancer by age 70.

WHY GET TESTED?

If you have cancer:

Knowing your *BRCA* status can help your health care team plan potential treatment options, such as targeted therapy. It can also help inform others in your family about their own cancer risk. Remember, you can get tested at any time—even after your initial diagnosis.

If you do not have cancer:

Knowing your *BRCA* status will let you know if you have an increased risk for developing certain cancers. From there, you and your doctor can then decide to screen for cancer more frequently or take preventive action. Finding out that you have a *BRCA* mutation can also prompt other family members to get tested to see if they are at risk.

Talk to your doctor about getting *BRCA* tested

YOUR FAMILY COULD BE AT RISK

Because *BRCA* mutations may be hereditary, they can be passed down to family members regardless of gender. This means that if you have a hereditary *BRCA* mutation, you inherited it from one of your parents. Detecting a *BRCA* mutation could help inform other members of your family of their risk for developing cancer.

If you have an inherited *BRCA* mutation

- Your children have a **50%** chance of inheriting the mutation
- Your siblings have a **50%** chance of having the mutation
- There's a **100%** chance that one of your parents has the mutation

FILL OUT YOUR FAMILY HISTORY

It's important to know your family's history of cancer when you talk to your doctor about genetic testing. Although family history is not the only indicator of a *BRCA* mutation, it can help guide decisions about being tested.

Fill out the chart below for your next medical appointment.

Family Member	Type of Cancer	Age at Diagnosis

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR

General information

- What are *BRCA* mutations?
- Who should get *BRCA* tested?
- How are men impacted by *BRCA* mutations?
- What's the process of getting tested?
- Will my insurance cover testing?

If you have cancer

- How can my *BRCA* test results influence my treatment options?
- Could my family members have a *BRCA* mutation?
- How can I talk to my family about getting genetic testing?

If you do not have cancer

- What happens if I do have a *BRCA* mutation?
- What are the pros and cons of knowing my *BRCA* status?
- Should my family members get tested if I have a mutation?

TAKE NOTE

Use this space to take notes during your appointment or to write down any additional questions you may have.
