



# QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR

## Inherited Gene Mutations and Breast Cancer Risk

Every cell in your body contains genes. Sometimes people are born with an error (called a [gene mutation](#)) in one of those genes. A gene mutation can be inherited from your mother or father. *BRCA1* and *BRCA2* are the most well-known genes linked to breast cancer risk.

Everybody has these genes. It's the mutation in one of these genes that is associated with a higher risk of breast cancer, not the genes themselves. However, most breast cancers in the U.S. are not caused by inherited gene mutations.

How gene mutations can affect breast cancer risk can be confusing. You may feel overwhelmed and unsure of what to ask your doctor or genetic counselor. Here are some questions to help start the conversation.

**Q:** How do I know if I have an inherited gene mutation? Do you recommend I speak to a genetic counselor or get genetic testing? If not, why not?

**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 my family need to know about genetic testing and how can we use this information?

**A:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

**A:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Q:** If I decide to get tested, when should I have it done?

**A:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

A: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Q: If I have an inherited gene mutation, what does it mean for my risk of breast cancer or other cancers?

A: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Q: If I have an inherited gene mutation, what can I do to lower my risk of breast cancer or other cancers?

A: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Q: If I have an inherited gene mutation, how will this impact my family? Will my family members get breast cancer or other cancers?

A: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Q: If I don't have an inherited gene mutation, what screening plan should I follow?

A: \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

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For more information on breast health or breast cancer, please call the Komen Patient Care Center's Breast Care Helpline 1-877 GO KOMEN (1-877-465-6636) Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. ET and Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. ET or visit [komen.org](http://komen.org). Susan G. Komen does not provide medical advice.

**1-877 GO KOMEN (1-877-465-6636) [komen.org](http://komen.org)**