

# beBRCAware

## Why *BRCA* status makes a difference

*BRCA* mutations may impact the way ovarian and breast cancer are treated. Find out how early testing can help you and your doctor create a treatment plan that's right for you.



You may have heard of the *BRCA* gene before, but you should know how its role could impact you. This brochure can help you understand the essentials.

## KNOWLEDGE IS POWER



Find out what it means to beBRCAware at [beBRCAware.com](https://beBRCAware.com). | @beBRCAware





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

What Is <i>BRCA</i> ? .....	4
Benefits of Knowing Your <i>BRCA</i> Status .....	5
The Role of <i>BRCA</i> in Certain Cancers .....	6
Who Should Consider <i>BRCA</i> Testing? .....	8
How to Get Tested for <i>BRCA</i> Mutations .....	10
When to Get Tested for <i>BRCA</i> Mutations .....	11
Know Your Treatment Options .....	12
How to Start the Conversation .....	15
The <i>BRCA</i> Basics .....	Back Cover



# WHAT IS *BRCA*?

## Everyone has *BRCA* genes

Normally, *BRCA* genes create proteins that help repair damaged DNA and prevent tumors from growing.

If you have a *BRCA* mutation, these proteins may not work the way they should. So when DNA is damaged, it can't be properly repaired. As a result, cells may grow to form a tumor. Having a *BRCA* mutation doesn't mean that you will get cancer, but it does increase your risk for certain cancers. That's why it's so important to beBRCAware.





# BENEFITS OF KNOWING YOUR *BRCA* STATUS

## Knowing your *BRCA* status is useful for 2 different reasons

### To inform your treatment options

If you have ovarian cancer or certain types of breast cancer, knowing your *BRCA* status empowers you and your doctor to approach treatment differently. Starting the conversation early may prepare your health care team to develop a proactive treatment plan.

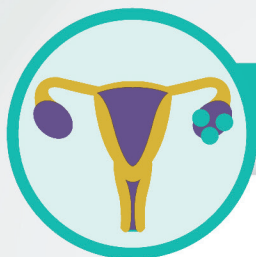
### To inform you of your family's risk of certain cancers

If you do not have cancer, but you have a family history of certain cancers, knowing your *BRCA* status allows you and your doctor to consider taking preventive action regarding cancer risk. Since *BRCA* mutations can be inherited, your results could also inspire other family members to get tested.

Knowing your testing options can empower you to have a proactive and productive conversation with your doctor

# THE ROLE OF *BRCA* IN CERTAIN CANCERS

Knowing whether or not you have a *BRCA* mutation can inform you of your risk of certain cancers, including ovarian cancer and breast cancer.



## *In ovarian cancer*

~25%

of women diagnosed with ovarian cancer have a *BRCA* mutation.

~40%

of women with both ovarian cancer and a family history of cancer have a *BRCA* mutation.

47%

**Family history is important, but it's not always an indicator of a *BRCA* mutation.** A study showed that 47% of women with *BRCA*-mutated ovarian cancer have no family history of relevant cancers.

The only way to know if you have a *BRCA* mutation is to get tested





## *In breast cancer*

**5% to 10%**

of women diagnosed with breast cancer have a *BRCA* mutation.

**14%**

Although it is not common, men can get breast cancer, too. One study found that 14% of men with breast cancer have a *BRCA* mutation.

**27%**

About 27% of all *BRCA*-mutated breast cancers occur in individuals with no family history of breast or ovarian cancer.

Although having a *BRCA* mutation increases your risk of certain cancers, it also means that more treatment options may be available to you. **That's why knowing your *BRCA* status is so important.**



# WHO SHOULD CONSIDER *BRCA* TESTING?

**If you have ovarian or certain types of breast cancer,  
ask your doctor about *BRCA* testing**

Testing positive for a *BRCA* mutation helps your doctor determine appropriate treatment options. **The following leading cancer organizations recommend genetic counseling and genetic testing for people with *BRCA*-related cancers, regardless of family history, to help determine treatment options:**




**If your family has a history of cancer, talk  
to your doctor about getting *BRCA* tested**

A family history of certain cancers, such as breast and ovarian cancers, may suggest that a *BRCA* mutation runs in your family.

If you have a family history of these cancer types, ask your doctor to assess your risk of developing cancer. If you do have a *BRCA* mutation, there is a 50% chance you could pass that mutation along to your children.



A woman with short blonde hair is sitting at a wooden table in a kitchen, holding a mug with both hands. She is wearing a white shirt and a floral apron. The kitchen has wooden cabinets and a bowl of tomatoes on the counter. The lighting is warm and natural.

**All women diagnosed with ovarian cancer, regardless of age or family history, should receive genetic counseling and be offered genetic testing.**

**– Society of Gynecologic Oncology**

# HOW TO GET TESTED FOR *BRCA* MUTATIONS

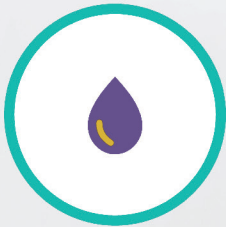
*BRCA* mutations can either be inherited from your parents or arise in your cancer. Hereditary *BRCA* mutations are called germline mutations, and acquired mutations are called somatic mutations.

**There are 2 types of *BRCA* mutation tests.** They can be given at different times and are used to identify different mutations.



## Tumor testing

This type of testing uses tumor tissue to detect *BRCA* mutations. Compared with blood or saliva testing alone, this comprehensive test could increase the odds of identifying a mutation by approximately 50%\* because it can help find both inherited (germline) and acquired (somatic) *BRCA* mutations.



## Blood or saliva testing

This type of testing uses DNA to identify inherited (germline) *BRCA* mutations. If you find out you have a *BRCA* mutation with a tumor test, you may receive a blood or saliva test to see if it is inherited or not. This is important to determine your family's cancer risk and your treatment options.

\*~25% of women with ovarian cancer present with a *BRCA* mutation. ~15% germline *BRCAm*(1) + ~7% somatic *BRCAm* (2). ~7%/~15% =~50%



# WHEN TO GET TESTED FOR *BRCA* MUTATIONS

## Early testing could help inform your treatment plan sooner

If you have ovarian or certain types of breast cancer, the sooner you ask about when you'll be *BRCA* tested, the sooner you and your doctor can create a treatment plan that is right for you. For individuals with certain types of cancer, testing could happen as early as diagnosis. Knowing your *BRCA* status can help you and your doctor make treatment decisions earlier to help stop cancer from progressing or coming back.

If your doctor thinks you should be tested, he or she may refer you to a genetic counselor, who will guide you through the process of learning your *BRCA* status



# KNOW YOUR TREATMENT OPTIONS



## ***BRCA* mutations can influence treatment of certain cancers**

If you have ovarian or certain types of breast cancer, knowing your *BRCA* status can help you have a meaningful conversation with your doctor about treatment options. From there, your doctor can determine the right plan for you.

<b>Surgery</b>	Surgery can be the first step in treating ovarian or breast cancer. Surgery removes as much of the cancerous tissue as possible.
<b>Chemotherapy</b>	Chemotherapy drugs enter the bloodstream to kill cancer cells. They can be injected into a vein or given by mouth.
<b>Radiation therapy</b>	Radiation therapy uses high-energy x-rays to kill cancer cells, and can be useful after surgery or if cancer has spread to other parts of the body.
<b>Targeted therapy</b>	Targeted therapy is a type of treatment designed to block the growth of cancer cells. Your <i>BRCA</i> status may help inform if targeted therapy is right for you.
<b>Hormone therapy</b>	Hormone therapy stops the body from making certain hormones, or stops the action of the hormones that help fuel cancer growth.

**New treatment options are constantly being explored in clinical trials. Ask your doctor how you could play a role in the advancement of cancer treatment.**



***"The next thing [my doctor will] want to do is based on knowing that I am BRCA-positive."***

**– An ovarian cancer survivor on how her BRCA mutation status impacted her treatment**



# FEEL EMPOWERED TO OWN YOUR JOURNEY

Good communication with your health care team is an essential part of your journey. You should feel empowered to have meaningful conversations during your appointment.





# HOW TO START THE CONVERSATION

## Consider asking questions like:

- ☐ What are *BRCA* mutations?
- ☐ What are the benefits of knowing my *BRCA* status?
- ☐ How soon should we consider *BRCA* testing?
- ☐ What's the process of getting tested?
- ☐ Will my insurance cover testing?
- ☐ What happens next if I do have a *BRCA* mutation?
- ☐ How can *BRCA* test results influence my treatment options?
- ☐ Could my family members have a *BRCA* mutation?
- ☐ How can I talk to my family about genetic testing?

# THE *BRCA* BASICS

Getting tested for a *BRCA* mutation could be an important decision.  
Here are the key things you need to know:

## WHY

to get tested

There are 2 reasons to find out whether or not you have a *BRCA* mutation:

- To inform your **treatment options**
- To inform you and your family of the **risk of certain cancers**

## WHO

should get tested

All women with ovarian cancer and people with certain types of breast cancer should receive genetic testing. Individuals with a family history of certain cancers or *BRCA* mutations should talk to their doctor about testing.

## WHEN

to get tested

Ask about testing as soon as possible. Early testing can help inform treatment decisions sooner.

## HOW

to get tested

There are 2 types of *BRCA* mutations. Talk to your doctor to find out how to get tested for either of these mutations.

Discover more about *BRCA* at [beBRCAware.com](https://beBRCAware.com), and continue the conversation by joining the beBRCAware community on social media.



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