

Are You at Risk for Hereditary Breast Cancer?

Familial Cancer Risk Assessment Center

Get more information.

Talk with your health care providers about your risk of hereditary breast cancer and about your family history. They might suggest you talk with a genetic counselor at the **Familial Cancer Risk Assessment Center** at Lahey Clinic. A genetic counselor can help you better understand your risk and help you make decisions about your health.

To make an appointment with the Familial Cancer Risk Assessment Center, please call 781-744-3982. To learn more about the Center, visit www.lahey.org/FCRAC.

To help you look at your family history of cancer and other diseases, visit www.familyhistory.hhs.gov.



We do not always know what causes breast cancer. But some people have a higher risk of the disease. Sometimes, people get breast cancer because they were born with a certain gene that does not work as it should (called a “gene mutation”). This type of breast cancer is called **hereditary breast cancer**.

By looking at your family’s health or “family history,” you can learn if you are at risk for hereditary breast cancer. Understanding your risk will help you make important decisions about your health. These decisions may help prevent cancer or find cancer early when it is easier to treat.

Take care of yourself. Follow these steps to look at your family history and learn if you may have a risk of hereditary breast cancer.

Know your family history.

Your family history can give helpful clues about your breast cancer risk. The table below will help you look at your family history. Use these tips to fill out the table:

- List close blood relatives who have or had breast cancer, ovarian cancer or both. Having a risk of one of these cancers may raise the risk of the other.
- Close blood relatives can be on your mother’s side or your father’s side of the family. These relatives are your mother, father, sisters, brothers, children, grandparents, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews and first cousins.
- Fill out the table the best that you can, even if you do not know all of your family history.



List all of your close blood relatives who have or had breast or ovarian cancer.

Example: Mother

List whether your relative has or had breast cancer, ovarian cancer or both.

Breast and Ovarian

Write your relative’s age when the cancer was found.

Breast at 39; Ovarian at 65

Learn your risk.

Now answer these questions. Put an **X** in the box under the right answer. Look at the table with your family history to help you.

	YES	NO
– Do you have a mother, sister or daughter who has or had breast cancer?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
– Do you have a close blood relative whose breast cancer was found before age 50?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
– Do you have a close blood relative who has or had cancer in both breasts?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
– Do you have a close blood relative who has or had ovarian cancer?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
– Do you have a close blood relative who has or had both breast and ovarian cancers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
– Do you have a close blood relative who is male and has or had breast cancer?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
– Are you of Ashkenazi Jewish (family from Eastern Europe) background?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
– Have you or a close blood relative ever had a genetic test that showed an increased risk of cancer?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, you may be at risk for hereditary breast cancer. But remember:

- Even if you have a risk of hereditary breast cancer, you may never get the disease.
- The above questions are basic. They will not find all hereditary breast cancers. So, even if you answered “no” to all of the questions, you may still be at risk.

For these reasons, it is important to get more information to better understand your risk. See the back of this brochure to learn how.