

Let's Talk Genetic Testing for Hereditary Breast Cancer Risk

A CONVERSATION GUIDE FOR PATIENTS



Understanding your risk and need for testing:

- Based on my personal and family medical history, do you think genetic testing for hereditary breast cancer risk is something I should consider?
- What specific risk factors do I have that might suggest the need for a hereditary cancer panel test?
- Are there any other genetic tests or cancer screening you would recommend based on my family history of cancer?



Process for testing:

- If testing is recommended, what does hereditary cancer panel testing involve (e.g., blood test, saliva test)?
- How long does it typically take to get the results back?
- Who will explain the results to me, and what kind of support will be available if I test positive?



Implications of results:

- If I test positive for a BRCA pathogenic variant, what are the implications for my future health and cancer risk?
- What preventative measures or increased cancer screening would be recommended if I have a BRCA pathogenic variant?
- How might a positive result impact my family members, and what information should I share with them?
- If I test negative, what does that mean for my cancer risk, and are there still any steps I should take to reduce my risk?
- If I get a “variant of uncertain significance”, what would be the next steps?



Logistics and cost:

- Is hereditary cancer panel testing covered by my provincial health plan or private insurance?
- Are there any out-of-pocket costs I should be aware of?
- Where would the testing be performed?



Other considerations:

- What are the potential emotional or psychological impacts of undergoing genetic testing, and what resources are available for support?
- Are there any other support groups or patient resources you would recommend?



Genetics Education Canada: Knowledge Organization (GECKO) offers useful information on hereditary breast cancer that may be helpful in discussing hereditary breast cancer with your healthcare provider.

Please direct them to geneticseducation.ca/resources-for-clinicians/cancer-genomics/hereditary-breast-ovarian-cancer for more information.