

Information about Genetic Testing:

Helping to Make
Treatment Decisions for
Breast, Ovarian,
Prostate & Pancreatic
Cancer

What is genetic testing?

Genetic testing is a blood or saliva (spit) test that looks at your genes. Genetic testing looks for errors in your genes.

What is a gene?

Genes are pieces of your DNA. Your DNA is found inside every cell in your body. Your genes tell your body how to work. Your genes come from your parents: half from your mom, the other half from your dad.

What is Hereditary (Inherited) Cancer?

Hereditary (inherited) cancer means a gene error is passed from one generation to another, which increases the risk of cancer. A gene error is a change in a gene that stops the gene from working as it should. Only about 10% of all cancer is hereditary.

Why am I being offered genetic testing?

Genetic testing can determine if your cancer is hereditary. Knowing if your cancer is hereditary can:

- Help guide your cancer treatment.
- Tell us if you are at higher risk for other types of cancer.
- Give information to your family members about their own cancer risk.

Do I have to do genetic testing?

No. Genetic testing is a choice. Your oncologist/surgeon can order this test for you today. The provincial health plan covers the cost of genetic testing.

How will you receive your genetic test result?

Your oncologist/surgeon will review your result with you when it is ready. The Cancer Genetics clinic will also offer an appointment with a Genetic Counsellor for further discussion.

Pathogenic/Likely Pathogenic Variant Detected:

- This result means that the test found an error in one or more genes.
- You may have a higher risk for some types of cancer and there may be changes to your cancer screening, treatment, and/or risk reduction plans.
- Genetic testing will be available for your family members.

Variant of Uncertain Significance (VUS) Detected:

- This result means that the test found a change in one or more of the genes tested but the genetics experts do not know if it increases cancer risk.
- There is no change in your cancer screening, treatment, and/or risk reduction plans.
- Personal risk factors and family history of cancer will determine cancer risk. Unaffected family members would not be offered genetic testing.

No Clinically Significant Variants Detected:

- This result means that the test did not find a gene error.
- There is no change to your cancer screening, treatment, and/or risk reduction plans.
- Personal risk factors and family history of cancer will determine cancer risks. Your family members will likely not be offered genetic testing.

No matter the result of genetic testing, the Cancer Genetics clinic will offer an appointment to speak with a genetic counsellor.

The purpose of the genetic counsellor appointment includes:

- Reviewing the genetic test result in detail
- Answering your remaining questions
- Documenting the family history
- Determining if further genetic testing is warranted for yourself or your family
- Providing cancer risk management guidance for yourself and/or your family
- Discussing the option of future reassessment

You will be asked to complete a family history questionnaire prior to the appointment.
