

Further information

If you would like further information about breast cancer and genetic testing, ring the Breast Cancer Network Australia on 1800 500 258, or check their website at <http://www.bcna.org.au/>.

You can also access the Centre for Genetics Education (<http://www.genetics.edu.au/>) for more information.

Interpreter services for non-English speaking patients



If you need an interpreter, you can phone the **Health Care Interpreter Service** who will make your appointment and attend with you.

The Health Care Interpreter Service is available 24hrs a day 7 days a week.

Phone: 4223 8540



Published Date: 2014

Revision Date: 2017

Trim: DT14/27696

Genetic testing for Breast Cancer

Hereditary Cancer Clinic

Wollongong Hospital
Crown St, Wollongong
NSW 2500
Ph: (02) 4222 5706



Health
Illawarra Shoalhaven
Local Health District

Breast Cancer in the family

Breast cancer is very common. Many women have a family history of breast cancer.

Usually, having a family history of breast cancer will not increase your own risk of breast cancer greatly.

You can talk to your family doctor about your risk of breast cancer.

Your family doctor may refer you to a Hereditary Cancer Clinic to have a risk assessment for breast cancer.

Risk assessment for Breast Cancer

At the clinic, you will be seen by the genetic counsellor and the genetics doctor. They will talk to you about your own risk of breast cancer over your lifetime.

They will also talk to you about how to manage this risk. For instance, there are several different types of breast checks that women can have.

They may also talk to you about changes in your lifestyle that could lower your risk of breast cancer.

Genetic testing and Breast Cancer

Many women wonder whether genetic testing will help them and their family to work out what their risk of breast cancer is.

We know of two main genes (BRCA1 and BRCA2) where inheriting a faulty copy can cause a woman to have a high risk of breast (and ovarian) cancer.

These gene faults are uncommon even in families where there is a lot of breast cancer.

The first gene search



Some families that visit the Hereditary Cancer Clinic may be offered genetic testing of the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes.

This testing is free, if

1. There is a strong family history of breast or ovarian cancer

AND

2. A relative who has had breast or ovarian cancer themselves is willing to have the testing.

Your genetic counsellor and genetics doctor will work out whether you qualify for free testing.

If your family does not qualify, the test can still be done if you pay for it. The cost is about \$1700.

After genetic testing

If a gene fault is found

If a gene fault is found on the first search, other family members can visit the clinic to talk about what this means. They can have a test also if they want. This is free.

If a gene fault is not found

Faults in the BRCA1 and BRCA2 Genes are very uncommon, even in families with many cases of breast cancer.

In many families, there seems to be an inherited risk of breast cancer for unknown reasons. In this case, further genetic testing is not possible.

Family members may still want to visit the clinic to have a personal risk assessment.



What should I do next?

If you feel you may have a higher than average risk of breast cancer, please discuss this with your family doctor.

Your family doctor may give you a referral for the Hereditary Cancer Clinic.