

How Can Genetic Counseling Help?

Genetic counseling can help assess your cancer risk and determine if you could benefit from genetic testing. An initial genetic consultation includes taking a detailed family history, assessing the risk for hereditary cancer, reviewing basic cancer genetics, and discussing options for surveillance and testing. Some people will be relieved to find out that the risk for cancer is lower than they anticipated. Other people who are at increased risk for cancer may choose to pursue genetic testing and feel empowered to make lifestyle and medical management decisions to lower their cancer risk or increase the chance for early detection and treatment.

Who Do I Call for More Information?

Genetic counseling services are available through Greenwood Genetic Center's offices in Greenwood, Greenville, Spartanburg, and Columbia. If you have any questions, please call the office closest to where you live and ask to speak to a genetic counselor.

Greenwood

1 Gregor Mendel Circle
Greenwood, SC 29646
1-888-442-4363 (toll free)
(864) 941-8100

Greenville

2 Doctors Drive
Greenville, SC 29605
1-866-478-4363 (toll free)
(864) 250-7944
or (864) 455-1600 for prenatal counselors

Spartanburg

Regional Maternal-Fetal Medicine
863 North Church Street, Suite 610
Spartanburg, SC 29303
(864) 560-1615

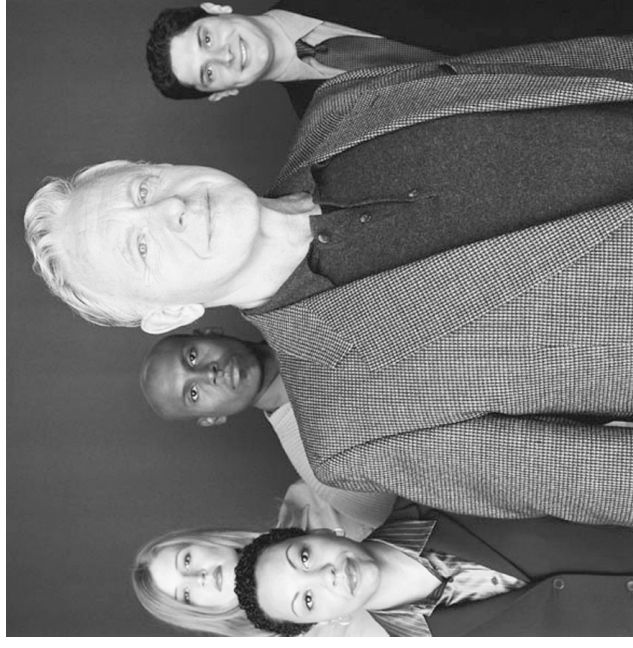
Columbia

529 Richland Street
Columbia, SC 29201
1-800-679-5390 (toll free)
(803) 799-5390

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This brochure is published by Greenwood Genetic Center, a nonprofit institute organized to provide clinical genetic services and laboratory testing, to develop educational programs and materials, and to conduct research in the field of medical genetics.

CANCER
And Your Family Tree



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Cancer and Your Family Tree

Approximately 1 in 3 Americans will develop cancer. Many of us have friends or family members affected by cancer, and people often feel that cancer “runs in the family.” Since cancer is such a common disease, it is not unusual for multiple relatives in a large family to have cancer. Research shows that 5-10% of all cancer has a hereditary component. Fortunately, there have been many advances in recent years in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of cancer.

The Greenwood Genetic Center provides risk assessment and genetic counseling services to individuals concerned about their personal and/or family history of cancer. Some individuals may learn that their cancer risk is not as high as they imagined. Other individuals have a family history suggestive of hereditary cancer. They may wish to consider genetic testing and more aggressive screening measures.

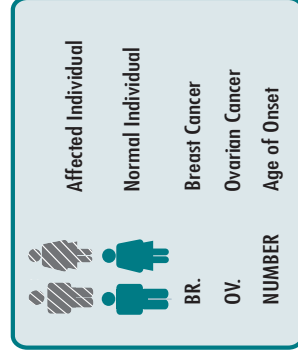
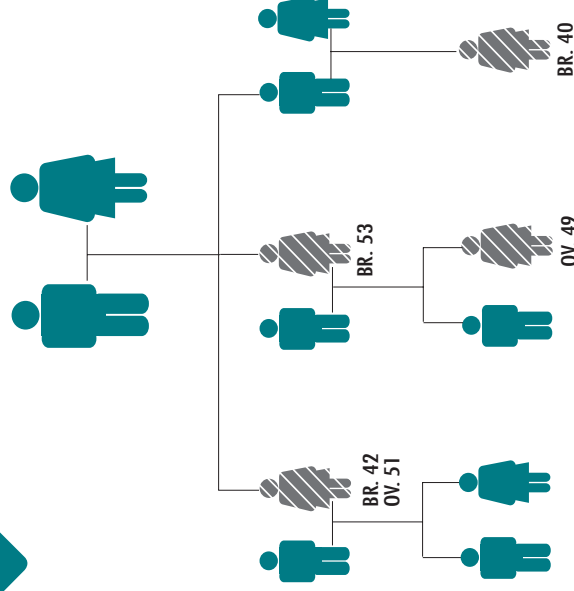
Who is at Risk for Hereditary Cancer?

Important points to consider in evaluating your family history for the possibility of hereditary cancer include:

- Cancer occurring at a younger age than the average in the general population. This usually means under age 50.
- The same type of cancer or related cancers in multiple blood relatives (e.g. breast and ovarian or colon and endometrial).
- Cancer occurring in both organs of a pair (e.g. both breasts).
- More than one occurrence of cancer in the same person.
- Cancer in two or more generations.

Careful evaluation of your family history is the most important factor in determining a risk for hereditary cancer. In many cases a young age of onset is more significant than the number of people with cancer. Enlist the help of family members and try to get specific information. For example, “female cancer” could mean cancer of the cervix, uterus, or ovaries. When patterns of cancer are identified in a family, a hereditary form of cancer may be suspected. Family members at increased risk may want to consider genetic testing to look for changes in the genes that are linked to certain types of cancer.

HEREDITARY CANCER FAMILY



What is Genetic Testing?

Genes are the basic units of heredity. We all have approximately 30,000 genes in each of our cells. Some genes may have a change called a mutation, which increases the risk for developing cancer. Genetic testing looks for gene mutations that are known to cause an increased risk for cancer and can identify individuals at increased risk for specific types of cancer who will benefit from increased cancer surveillance. A negative test result does not mean that a person will never develop cancer, but may indicate that the cancer risk is no higher than the risk in the general population. Testing is usually performed on a blood sample taken from a person's arm. It is important that individuals interested in genetic testing carefully evaluate the benefits and limitations of the test and consider how the test results will impact their family.

SPORADIC CANCER FAMILY

