



# HAVE THE TALK

knowledge is power

You can make a difference and take charge  
by learning about your family health history!

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PROGRAM

# THE FACTS

The fact is that Jewish women and men may have elevated risks for hereditary cancers such as breast, ovarian, uterine, colon, pancreatic, prostate, melanoma, and male breast cancer. We can each be carriers of *BRCA* gene mutations which are associated with those cancers. And, *BRCA* genetic mutation carriers have a 50% chance of passing it on to each of their children. In addition to *BRCA1* & *BRCA2*, there are numerous other mutations that you should know about including *ATM*, *CHEK2*, *PALB2* and gene mutations associated with Lynch syndrome. It's important to know your risk, discuss it with your family and be proactive about your health. You can manage your risk by eating well, exercising, minimizing stress, and talking to your doctors about a customized screening plan.

# GET STARTED

## TIPS TO HELP START A CONVERSATION WITH YOUR FAMILY

- Yes, it can be a bit awkward talking to your parents about this particular subject. Acknowledging that fact (they're probably uncomfortable, too!) might make it easier for everyone.
- Ask your parents or a close relative if anyone in your family has had breast, ovarian, uterine, colon, pancreatic, prostate, melanoma or male breast cancer, and if anyone has had genetic testing or knows that they're a carrier of a genetic mutation. Use the family health history tree in this brochure to guide your conversation and document the responses.
- Keep your family history up to date as you learn more. Holidays and reunions are good times to talk with other members of the family to get as much information as possible.
- If while having The Talk you discover a family history of cancer, please get in touch with us for a free consultation with our genetic counselor or call your doctor.

# WRITE IT DOWN

**FAMILY HEALTH HISTORY** Complete Sharsheret's family pedigree chart and list any important health history information about your family such as age diagnosed with cancer (including, but not limited to breast, ovarian, uterine, colon, pancreatic, prostate, melanoma and male breast cancer), diabetes, heart disease, etc. Include details about genetic mutations such as *BRCA1*, *BRCA2*, *ATM*, *CHEK2* and *PALB2* and gene mutations associated with Lynch syndrome. Also, remember that each member is unique so this should be a general guide and feel free to create one that represents your family (e.g., Maternal Grandfather - male breast cancer diagnosed at age 63, BRCA2+).

After you finish, review your results and if you have concerns have a consultation with Sharsheret's genetic counselor, or call your doctor.

The diagram is a family pedigree chart template. It consists of several levels of boxes connected by lines, representing family members. Each box is a rounded rectangle with a colored header and three horizontal lines for text. The levels are:

- Level 1 (Grandparents):** Two pairs of boxes. Each pair has a "Grandfather" box (teal header) on the left and a "Grandmother" box (pink header) on the right.
- Level 2 (Aunts/Uncles and Parents):** Six boxes. From left to right: "Aunt or Uncle" (green header), "Aunt or Uncle" (green header), "Father" (teal header), "Mother" (pink header), "Aunt or Uncle" (green header), and "Aunt or Uncle" (green header).
- Level 3 (Siblings and YOU):** Three boxes. From left to right: "Sibling" (green header), "YOU" (pink header), and "Sibling" (green header).
- Level 4 (Children):** One box labeled "Children" (pink header).

Each box contains three horizontal lines for writing. The boxes are connected by vertical lines from the top level down to the bottom level, and horizontal lines connecting siblings at each level.

# TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR

As a young adult, it is important that you see a doctor you trust for an annual exam. Sometimes, talking to doctors can be stressful or even scary. Find one who makes you feel comfortable. Sharsheret has created these questions for you to use to as a guideline to help you navigate conversations with doctors and other medical professionals. When talking to them, share what's on your mind, take notes and always ask questions if you don't understand.

- What are the risk factors for breast, ovarian, uterine, colon, prostate, pancreatic, melanoma and male breast cancer? How might they impact my lifetime risk for developing cancer?
- My family health history shows a lot of cancer should I have genetic testing? At what age?
- At what age should I have my first mammogram? Will I need an MRI or ultrasound as well?
- What prevention and screening plan do you recommend for me based on my family history?
- What lifestyle changes could I make to reduce my risk of developing cancer? What risk factors do I need to be aware of?
- What symptoms do I need to watch for between doctor visits?

## ADDITIONAL SHARSHERET RESOURCES

- *Breast and Ovarian Cancer Signs and Symptoms*
- *What I Need To Know In College*
- *Know The Facts*
- *How Do I Tell My Children About My Cancer Gene*



SHARSHERET

BASSER  
CENTER  
FOR BRCA

 Penn Medicine

Sharsheret improves the lives of Jewish women and families living with or at increased genetic risk for breast or ovarian cancer through personalized support, and saves lives through educational outreach.

**For more information contact Sharsheret at [info@sharsheret.org](mailto:info@sharsheret.org) or 866.474.2774.**