

Part I of this tool can be used to identify individuals who may have an increased chance of having a hereditary predisposition to breast or ovarian cancer.

If an individual has a personal history of cancer, check out **Part II** for more detailed criteria. If ever in doubt, you can reach out to your local genetics clinic or eConsult.

Below are **general features** suggestive of hereditary cancer. If any of these are true, consider diving deeper into the family history with **Part II's** targeted criteria.

☐ Multiple relatives, on the same side of the family, with cancer diagnoses e.g. breast, ovarian, prostate, pancreatic
 ☐ Cancer diagnosed at a younger than expected age e.g. ≤ 50 years
 ☐ Several generations of cancer diagnoses
 ☐ Clustering of certain related cancer types e.g. breast, ovarian, prostate, pancreatic
 ☐ Individuals with more than one cancer diagnosis
 ☐ Rare or unusual cancer diagnoses

Here are some targeted questions you can incorporate into your family history taking to assess suspicion of hereditary breast or ovarian cancer.

Check if 'Yes'

☐ Did any of your close relatives have breast cancer?
 A close relative is generally defined as a first- or second- degree relative. More distant relatives can be considered if there is limited family structure (i.e. few relatives).
 ☐ Did any of your relatives have ovarian cancer?
 ☐ Did any of your relatives have bilateral breast cancer (i.e., cancer in both breasts)?
 ☐ Did any man (assigned male at birth) in your family have breast cancer?
 ☐ Did any person in your family have breast cancer at or before the age of 50 years?
 ☐ Did any person in your family have both breast and ovarian cancer?
 ☐ Are there two diagnoses of breast, ovarian, prostate, and/or pancreatic cancer in your family? These cancers may have occurred in two different relatives, or both may have occurred in the same person.
 ☐ Do you have Ashkenazi Jewish ancestry and a family history of breast, prostate, or colorectal cancer and/or gastrointestinal polyposis?

Individuals who meet one or more of the criteria above may be eligible for high-risk breast cancer screening with MRI, genetic counselling and/or genetic testing.



When possible, the individual at highest likelihood to carry a pathogenic variant (e.g. affected with cancer, diagnosed at a young age, diagnosed with a rare cancer such as male breast cancer) is offered testing first in order to (1) maximize the likelihood of identifying a pathogenic variant, (2) decrease the likelihood of an uninformative result.

Hereditary Cancer Services across Canada (Many hereditary cancer programs/clinics are within general genetics programs):
 [Accessed July 2026]

- Alberta & Northwest Territories - [Hereditary Cancer Clinic](#)
- Atlantic Canada - [Maritime Medical Genetics Service](#)
- British Columbia & Yukon - [Hereditary Cancer Program](#)
- Manitoba & Nunavut - [Hereditary Cancer Service](#)
- Newfoundland and Labrador - [Provincial Medical Genetics](#)
- Ontario & Nunavut - [Ontario Genetics Clinic Directory](#)
- Québec - [Medical Genetics Programs](#)
- Saskatchewan - Medical Genetics at Royal University Hospital [Hereditary Cancer Referral](#)



Part II: Hereditary breast and ovarian cancer screening tool to identify patients who are at high risk of having a hereditary cancer predisposition.

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Eligibility criteria for genetic testing vary across Canadian provinces. In general, criteria are based on personal and/or family history that increase the likelihood of a hereditary cancer susceptibility syndrome.

These criteria are intended to identify individuals at increased risk for hereditary breast and ovarian cancer. Depending on the causative gene, personal and/or family histories may also include prostate, pancreatic, and other cancers.

Strongly consider referral for a genetic assessment to your local genetics centre or hereditary cancer program if an individual has a personal history of:

- ☐ Breast cancer at a young age (≤ 45 -50 years)
- ☐ Ovarian cancer at any age
- ☐ Triple negative breast cancer
- ☐ Multiple cancer diagnoses
e.g. breast and ovarian cancer, two primary breast cancer diagnoses
- ☐ Male breast cancer at any age
- ☐ Prostate cancer ≤ 50 years
- ☐ High-risk prostate cancer at any age (e.g. metastatic, locally advanced, Gleason score 8-10, PSA ≥ 20)
- ☐ Breast or prostate cancer at any age and:
 - ☐ A first- or second-degree relative with a cancer history mentioned above OR
 - ☐ Two or more first- or second- degree relatives with a breast or prostate diagnosis
- ☐ Pancreatic cancer at any age
- ☐ Ashkenazi Jewish ancestry and breast, prostate, or colorectal cancer and/or gastrointestinal polyposis at any age

Strongly consider referral for a genetic assessment to your local genetics centre or hereditary cancer program if an individual has a family history where:

- ☐ There is a blood relative with a known pathogenic/likely pathogenic genetic variant in a cancer susceptibility gene
Report or documentation containing specific gene and variant should be available.
- ☐ Ashkenazi Jewish ancestry AND at least one first- or second- degree relative with colorectal cancer ≤ 60 years **or** one of the following cancers at any age: breast cancer, ovarian cancer, pancreatic cancer, metastatic prostate cancer or GI polyposis.
- ☐ An established risk model* calculates a 5 percent or greater ($\geq 5\%$) chance to carry a pathogenic/likely pathogenic variant in a gene associated with HBOC (e.g. BRCA1, BRCA2, CHEK2, PALB2, ATM) [Models will include personal and family history].

*CanRisk Web Tool <https://www.canrisk.org/> - Free registration required

*IBIS Breast Cancer Risk Evaluation Tool - Free download required
<https://ems-trials.org/risevaluator/>

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