

10 Questions to Help You Understand Your Breast Cancer Risk

Understanding your personal risk of breast cancer can help you make informed choices about your health. Whether you see a family doctor, nurse practitioner, or go to a walk-in clinic, these questions can help you get the information you need about your breast cancer risk.

1. Does my **family history** increase my risk of breast cancer (for example, if I have close relatives with breast or ovarian cancer)?
 2. Can you tell me if I might qualify for **genetic testing** (for BRCA1, BRCA2, or other inherited mutations)?
 3. Are any of the following **risk factors** relevant to me?
 - My age, menstrual or reproductive history, or menopause status
 - My history of benign breast disease (like cysts or non-cancerous lumps)
 - My history of radiation exposure
 4. How do **lifestyle factors** such as weight, alcohol use, smoking, or physical activity affect my risk?
 5. Do **hormone exposures** (like birth control, fertility treatments, or hormone replacement therapy) change my risk?
 6. What is my **breast density** grade, and does it increase my risk?
 7. Based on my health and history, would you say I'm at **average, increased, or high risk** of developing breast cancer?
 8. What is the right age, frequency, and method for me to get **screened for breast cancer**?
 9. What steps can I take now to **lower my risk** (like lifestyle changes or medications)?
 10. If I don't have a **family doctor** and you recommend screening, can I have the results sent here so you can review them with me?
-

Notes:

Preparing for Your Appointment

To get the most out of your appointment, it helps to prepare. Bring this handout with you, and consider these tips to make sure your healthcare provider has the information they need to give you the best advice.

Bring your family history

Write down if close relatives (parents, siblings, children, aunts, uncles, or grandparents) have had breast, ovarian, or other cancers, and note their ages at diagnosis if you know them.

Share your health history

Be ready to mention your menstrual and reproductive history (such as age at first period, pregnancies, or menopause), any breast conditions, or past radiation treatments.

List your medications

Include birth control, fertility treatments, or hormone replacement therapy.

Think about your lifestyle

Be honest about alcohol, smoking, activity level, and weight changes. These can all play a role in risk.

Bring your questions

Use this handout to help you ask and keep track of answers.

Notes:
