



# Challenging Choices Webinar

Follow up support for those facing difficult decisions after being diagnosed as a carrier of the BRCA1 and/or BRCA2 gene fault

The following resources have been provided for you, your partner, families and friends as part of your supporting your webinar experience. If you are unable to find the information you are looking for, or would like further information, please call the [Cancer Council Helpline on 13 11 20, Monday to Friday 9 am – 5 pm](#).

Our cancer nurses can provide general information for people diagnosed with the BRCA 1 and/ or BRCA2 gene fault or refer you to the appropriate service or health care professional to assist you.

## Information for people diagnosed with BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene fault

**Please note:** *These fact sheets are for people diagnosed with a BRCA 1 or BRCA2 gene fault. The information is general in nature and not considered an alternative to medical advice. The fact sheets were updated in 2011 and are based on current scientific evidence. The information in the booklets was current at the time of publication – however we recommend checking with your doctor or genetic counselling service for any new information.*

### [Managing your breast cancer risk: Prevention strategies](#)

This fact sheet provides information about a number of prevention strategies that may reduce your risk for breast cancer.

### [Managing your breast cancer risk: Lifestyle factors](#)

This fact sheet informs you about lifestyle factors that may affect your breast cancer risk.

### [Managing your breast cancer risk: Screening methods](#)

This fact sheet tells you about screening methods that may reduce your breast cancer risk.

### [Managing your ovarian cancer risk: Prevention strategies](#)

This fact sheet tells you about prevention strategies that may reduce your ovarian cancer risk.

### [Managing your ovarian cancer risk: Lifestyle factors](#)

This fact sheet tells you about lifestyle factors that may affect your risk for ovarian cancer.

### [Understanding genetic tests for breast and ovarian cancer that runs in the family: Information and decision aid](#)

This booklet contains information for women who are considering genetic testing for breast and ovarian cancer that runs in their family. This information is not a replacement for discussing genetic testing with your doctor or family cancer services. For hardcopies please contact Centre for Genetics Education, NSW Health on (02) 9926 7324. *(Reviewed 2010)*

### [Risk management options for women at increased risk of developing ovarian cancer](#)

This booklet has been written for women who are at high or potentially high risk of developing ovarian cancer and would like to know more about reducing their risk of this disease. For hardcopy please contact Centre for Genetics Education, NSW Health on (02) 9926 7324. *(Produced 2008)*

### [Information for women considering preventative mastectomy because of a strong family history of breast cancer](#)

This booklet is intended for women with a strong family history of breast cancer who may be considering the option of surgical removal of their breasts as a way of reducing their risk of developing breast cancer. This type of surgery is known as preventive or prophylactic mastectomy. Hardcopy please contact Centre for Genetics Education, NSW Health on (02) 9462 9599. (Produced 2012)

### [Surgical Menopause](#)

This link on the [Australian Menopause Society Website](#) provides useful information and tips about coping with menopause after surgical treatment.

## **Coping with changes after treatment**

### **Support Services**

#### **Speak to someone who has the BRCA gene fault**



Call your state [Cancer Council Helpline 13 11 20](#) and ask to speak with someone who has had preventative surgery, or gain practical tips about how others are living and coping with a BRCA gene fault diagnosis. *Talk to someone who understands, as they have been through it themselves.*

### [Changes can occur to your body image self-confidence and sexual relationships after treatment](#)

It is common for some women, depending on the type of treatment, to experience body image and physical changes. These can affect your sense of self, and your sexuality.

Side effects can include vaginal dryness, loss of interest in sex, hot flushes, or a loss of self-confidence. Our dedicated telephone counselling service can assist by connecting you with a specialist in this area- from the comfort of your own, to talking you through these issues.

*"Our research tells us that women in relationships, and single women, found it helpful to have more information regarding the impact of treatment on their fertility, body image and sex life. They told us very clearly they wanted access to sexual counselling. The research also told us that this was also important for partners. To find out more about support services in your area, please contact your state Cancer Council Helpline 13 11 20," Carole Arbuckle, Cancer Nurse.*



### **Pink Hope - An organisation for people with the BRCA 1 or 2 gene faults** [www.pinkhope.org.au](http://www.pinkhope.org.au)

Pink Hope is Australia's first community designed to inspire women to be proactive and vigilant with their breast and ovarian health, while providing a safe haven for high risk women to connect. Pink Hope will be providing new resources for partners shortly.

### **Support Groups**

There are currently no support groups for people diagnosed with the BRCA gene fault. If you are interested in setting up a Support Group, [The Genetic Support Group of Victoria](#) can assist you and direct people from other states to possible links in your state.

*Please note: All calls to the Cancer Council are confidential.*

## Legal information and insurance

### [Genetic information and life insurance products in Australia](#)

Fact sheet on information you need to know after genetic testing.

### [Genetic Discrimination Australia National Health and Medical Research Council](#)

General legal information on genetic testing and discrimination.

## Keeping healthy and being aware: Information on general cancer risk

Don't forget, also to think about your general cancer risk and keep up to date about cancer prevention for other cancers, cancer myths and misinformation. While it is important to know about your specific risk if you have the BRCA 1 or BRCA2 gene fault, a healthy lifestyle and information on reducing your risk of other cancers and is also a good general health strategy.

## Useful general resources and websites

- [Cut your cancer risk brochure](#)
- [www.cutyourcancerrisk.org.au](http://www.cutyourcancerrisk.org.au) provides up to date information on cancer prevention (for general cancer risk)
- [www.iheard.com.au](http://www.iheard.com.au) - dispels myths about cancer and cancer risks.

## Information for partners and families

### General information for families

The Cancer Council Victoria Website provides general information for you and your family on [What is meant by family history; How does family history affect your risk?; Inheriting a breast or ovarian cancer gene; What you can do.](#)

Cancer Council Victoria also has important links to information on [breast and ovarian cancer and genetics](#), information online from reputable websites and more detailed information on genetic testing counselling and the link to our Victorian Family Cancer Registry – a confidential database for families at risk.

### Talking to kids about cancer

<http://www.cancervic.org.au/about-cancer/cancer-and-children>



### Cancer in the family

The [Cancer in the family brochure](#) provides information about the location and contact details of Familial Cancer Centres in Melbourne, Victoria, the referral process and role of the centres as well as some frequently asked questions.

### Information and decision aid for men considering genetic testing

The [Understanding genetic tests for men who have a family history of breast and ovarian cancer booklet](#) is for men who are considering genetic testing because they have a family history of breast and/or ovarian cancer.