Breast Cancer Risk Assessment

Understanding Your Risk Score

Today one out of every eight women will develop breast cancer in their lifetime. But the risk of breast cancer is not the same for all women; it depends on your individual health history and family history.

What is a risk assessment?
The Breast Cancer Risk Assessment will help you understand your individual risk for developing breast cancer and identifies women at higher than average risk. It analyzes your individual risk factors using sophisticated breast cancer risk models. These models look at factors such as family history of cancer, age of your first period, height and weight, smoking history and medical history to predict your risk of breast cancer.

The risk assessment is completed on an electronic tablet with a touch screen. It consists of questions about your health history and several questions about your family’s history of cancer.

How do you receive your risk score?
After completing the assessment, your individual risk score is calculated and sent in your final mammogram report, along with your breast density, to your referring doctor who will review the information with you. You may request that your final mammogram report be sent to multiple doctors.

Why is it important to know your cancer risk?
Based on your individual risk, your doctor will be able to determine what preventive cancer screening is best for you, the frequency of screening and if you might benefit from genetic testing. Knowing your risk may also motivate you to make lifestyle choices and healthcare decisions to lower your risk and help prevent cancer.

High Risk Factors
Some factors raise your risk for breast cancer including:

- **Family history of breast and ovarian cancer.** Your risk increases if a mother, sister or daughter is diagnosed with breast cancer.¹
- **Genetic mutations,** having family members with a mutation, especially BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes.
- **History of abnormal breast biopsy,** atypical cells.
- **Dense breasts,** breasts comprised of more connective and glandular tissue and less fatty tissue have been associated with higher cancer risks.²
- **A high body mass index (BMI),** at 25 or over. BMI is based on your weight in relation to your height and indicates if you’re at a healthy weight. The higher your BMI the higher your risk for developing cancer.
- **Age,** 2 out of 3 invasive breast cancers are found in women over age 55.³
Lower Your Risk
A healthy lifestyle reduces your risk. Make healthy choices and try to:
• Avoid tobacco products
• Stay at a healthy weight
• Eat a healthy diet, reduce sugar, carbohydrates, red meats and processed foods
• Eat a plant based diet
• Be physically active
• Limit alcohol use
• Get regular health screenings, including mammograms
• Consider the risks vs. benefits of hormone replacement therapy and discuss them with your doctor

What if your risk score is high?
If your risk score is high, you and your doctor will work together to develop an individualized plan for your ongoing screening. This may include additional screening like a breast MRI or referral to a breast specialist for ongoing follow up and monitoring. You may also consider additional preventive measures to reduce the risk of cancer. For high risk patients, our goal is to find cancer early, when it is most treatable with the least invasive approach possible.

What type of care does a breast specialist provide?
Breast specialists are physicians and medical professionals trained to provide care for breast health and breast cancer. Care can include prevention and surveillance, genetic counseling and testing, and supportive programs to prevent cancer including healthy lifestyle and weight management.

Should you take the risk assessment if you have a history of breast cancer?
This assessment tool was developed for women who have not had a previous breast cancer. You can complete the assessment if you have a history of breast cancer, but keep in mind the results are more accurate for individuals who have not had cancer.

For additional information or questions, please call 330.375.3717 or visit summahealth.org/getscreened.