

Referral to the genetics clinic to discuss inherited ovarian cancer

This leaflet offers information about being referred to the genetics clinic to discuss the possibility of you having inherited ovarian cancer. If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us using the number given at the end of this information sheet.

What is inherited ovarian cancer?

One in 70 women in the general population will develop ovarian cancer. Of these women, a small proportion (approximately one in seven) may have inherited a genetic fault which has made them more likely than average to develop ovarian cancer.

Some of these women may have family members who have been diagnosed with breast or ovarian cancer, whilst others may have no family history of cancer.

What are genes?

Genes are coded messages which give the instructions for how cells grow and function. Genes come in pairs – we inherit one copy from each parent.

A **gene fault** is a change in the coded message, which alters the instructions for the cells.

How are genes involved in inherited ovarian cancer?

We know of two genes, called **BRCA1** and **BRCA2**, that have a role in the development of breast and ovarian cancer.

If a woman has a fault in one copy of the BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene, her risk of developing breast or ovarian cancer is increased. Women with a fault in these genes are more likely to develop cancer of the breast and/or ovary at a younger age and may get cancer more than once.

Who can have genetic testing for inherited ovarian cancer?

We would like to offer you an appointment in the genetics clinic to talk about the possibility that you might have a BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene fault. We will discuss testing for the gene fault, and what this might mean for you and your family.

What happens next?

If you would like a genetics appointment, please speak to your gynaecologist or oncologist and they will refer you to our service. We will then arrange an appointment to see you in the genetics clinic. If you choose to attend the appointment there is no obligation to take the test. We offer this test because there are new cancer treatments that specifically target BRCA gene faults. The results of the test could also have implications for other members of your family. If you would like to talk to us on the telephone first please call **020 7188 1364** and ask to speak to the **duty genetic counsellor**.