The most common hereditary cancers are breast, ovarian and colorectal. Cancer is not inherited, only the gene mutation that increases the risk factor of developing cancer is inherited.

**RED FLAGS FOR HEREDITARY BREAST AND OVARIAN CANCER (HBOC)**

- Breast cancer diagnosed before 50
- Ovarian cancer at any age
- Male breast cancer
- Individuals of Ashkenazi Jewish descent
- Two or more breast cancers in an individual or family
- A previously identified BRCA 1/2 mutation in the family

**RED FLAGS FOR LYNCH SYNDROME (HEREDITARY NON-POLYPOSIS COLORECTAL CANCER (HNPCC))**

- Colorectal cancer diagnosed before 50
- Endometrial cancer diagnosed before 50
- Two or more Lynch Syndrome cancers in an individual or family at any age, including colorectal, endometrial, ovarian, gastric, upper urinary tract, biliary tract, small bowel, pancreatic, brain and sebaceous adenomas.
AM I AT RISK?

Everyone has some chance of developing cancer. In most cases, the cause of cancer is unknown and happens by chance. However, 5 to 10 percent of all cancer is hereditary and caused by a genetic change increasing the risk of developing cancer. These genetic changes can be passed from generation to generation within a family.

RISK FACTORS

If you or a close relative have had any of the following, you may want to consider genetic counseling and testing.

- Cancer at a young age (under age 50)
- Rare cancers, such as male breast cancer
- Concern about your family history of cancer
- One or more relatives with a known hereditary cancer gene mutation
- Two or more close relatives on the same side of the family with cancer, especially of the same type
- More than one diagnosis of cancer in the same individual, such as breast and ovarian or colon and uterine cancer

WHAT IS GENETIC COUNSELING AND TESTING?

Cancer genetic counseling is the process of collecting your detailed personal and family history, assessing your personal risk and discussing your genetic testing options. These services should be provided by a counselor who is board-certified by the American Board of Genetic Counseling. Genetic tests of blood and other tissue are used to identify genetic disorders and can help determine a more precise estimate of your cancer risk. Although a cancer risk assessment can be provided without genetic testing, in some cases testing may help you and your physician make important decisions about your medical care.

SHOULD I CONSIDER COUNSELING AND TESTING?

Genetic counseling is typically recommended for people who have a personal and/or family history suggestive of a hereditary cancer condition. Having a family member with cancer does not automatically mean you are in a high-risk category.