



I know I'm at Risk - What Now?

Breast cancer does not just affect women, the men in their lives are also affected. There is unfortunately not much information easily available to men who are concerned about their own, or their loved ones' risk of breast cancer. Pink Hope is aiming to help close this gap with resources for men, like this one.

This resource is for you if you are concerned about your risk of cancer because:

- A BRCA1 or BRCA2 mutation has been identified in your family.
- A BRCA1 or BRCA2 mutation has been identified in you.
- Your family has been identified as being at high risk of breast and/or ovarian cancer.



Male breast cancer is rare (1 in 100 000 men), but it happens. The biggest risk factor for male breast cancer is **family history**, especially where there is a known inherited predisposition. BRCA 1 and BRCA2 are two “**cancer protection**” genes which if faulty can cause an increased risk of breast and ovarian cancer in women. Men who carry these genes are also at increased risk of certain cancers with **7% of male BRCA2 carriers developing breast cancer before the age of 70**. BRCA1 and BRCA2 carriers are also at increased risk of prostate cancer.

Real Men know when to ask for **Help**



What do I do as a Man in a High Risk Family?

When people talk breast cancer, they usually talk women. As a man in a high risk family, you may be aware of a whole lot of talking going on, but not necessarily be in the loop. This information is important to you too, both in terms of your own cancer risk and the implications for your family members if you carry an inherited cancer predisposition. **If you care and want to be involved, we encourage you to Man Up and join the conversation.** In this way you can share in the family experience, share your expertise and perspective and show your support to other family members.

If you have concerns regarding your cancer risk, then your GP or familial cancer clinic will be able to provide you with risk management strategies. As with any type of cancer early detection is your best defence and its best to speak with the experts to find out what you can do to catch cancer early.



Coping

Men who are carriers of BRCA1 or BRCA2 mutations are in a unique and difficult situation as they are able to pass on an inherited cancer predisposition but are unlikely to be affected by it themselves. A lot of men in this position can feel guilty and worry about their children and grandchildren and their future. It is important to remember that you are not responsible for passing on this mutation; this is something we cannot control.



A diagnosis of BRCA1 or BRCA2 or male breast cancer can cause other reactions too. Anxiety is a common one, especially around your own risk of developing cancer. Men at high risk may also feel lonely as they are often left out of conversations about breast cancer and risk management. Many men also struggle with feeling they have lost control after learning of their high risk status, especially considering the limitations of screening.

We at Pink Hope want you to know that you are not alone. As a member of a high risk family you may have a support network of relatives going through similar experiences. **If you can Man Up and reach out you may be able to find support and understanding closer than you thought.** There are also a number of resources for men of high risk families. If it's more information you're after then Pink Hope has information for you and lists a number of other websites you can access. If you need someone to talk to, **Pink Hope has a genetic counsellor you can access, there is also the cancer hotline and men's line Australia or you can contact your familial cancer clinic.**

If you are having difficulty coping with your cancer risk or the implications of your carrier status then please Man Up and ask for help.