

Genetic referral

Your GP has considered the family history of breast cancer you have supplied him/her with, and has referred you to see a genetics clinic to discuss your situation further.

What can I expect?

Often, you will receive a family history form for you to fill in with as much detail as possible. This is so that a picture of your family tree can be established ready for your appointment. This is one of the most important areas, and you should try to present the information as accurately as possible. Sometimes you will receive a telephone call from a genetic counselor to gather information or receive an appointment for information gathering about your family history.

What happens next?

If your family history is deemed significant you will usually receive an appointment to see a geneticist, genetic counsellor or specialist nurse about your family history. In some cases you may just be referred for extra screening (mammograms) annually either to a local breast unit or in the future direct to the National Health service Breast Screening Programme. There are Genetic centres in many major cities around the country, but there are also many outreach clinics from those centres within local hospitals. This is where your first appointment might be.

What happens at my appointment?

Usually, someone will discuss the family tree, and the implications to you. You may then be given a lifetime risk factor, and informed of all the options available to you. This may include the possibility of genetic tests in your family. Don't worry if you forget all the information you receive, as this generally will be followed up with a letter to you and your GP.

The Hereditary Breast Cancer Helpline is available 24 hours for anyone worrying about breast cancer risk, or wishing to discuss the options with other patients who have experienced these decisions. Tel 01629 813000, web www.breastcancergenetics.co.uk