

Planning My Talk

Fill in the spaces below to start the conversation with your child(ren) and check all boxes that apply:

Before the Talk

By the end of the first talk, I would like my child(ren)

To Feel _____

To Know _____

Who would be the best person to share the news about my BRCA mutation with my child(ren)?

- I will share the news with my child(ren)
- _____ will share the news with my child(ren)

When do I think the BRCA mutation should be shared with my child(ren)?

- Now
- In a few months
- In a year or more

When is a good time of day to talk with your child(ren)?

- Mornings
- Evenings
- Weekdays
- Weekends

TIP! Think about what else is going on that may influence timing (exams, relationship/peer challenges, etc.)

Where do I have the best conversations with my child(ren)?

- I would like the first talk to take place _____

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Getting the Talk Started

My child takes in information best by:

TIP! *What has worked well during important conversations with my child? How does your child handle tough stuff?*

Choosing Your Words

- I have some news about my health that I would like to talk to you about. Would now be a good time?
- I would like to talk to you about something important. Would now be a good time?

Add your own words:

What do I want my child(ren) to know about gene mutations?

TIP! *Consider their age when discussing this. You may want to do this in stages, starting with a small amount of information when they are young.*

- Genes and cancer
- BRCA 1 and BRCA 2 mutations
- 50/50 chance of inheriting mutation: What this means for them?
- Cancer risk management
- Guidelines and recommendations for screening/monitoring
- Self-checks
- Healthy Choices (i.e. no smoking, sunscreen, eating well, healthy body weight, exercise)

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Recognizing Emotions

My feelings related to my gene mutation

- Do I feel calm when I talk about BRCA mutation?
- Do I feel confident in the medical decisions I have made?
- I feel empowered to make choices that can help avoid cancer
- I feel educated regarding my options to make an informed choice
- I am confident my child(ren) can handle this

Add your own words:

In the past, how has your child dealt with difficult news?

TIP! *Be aware of past patterns (i.e. pay attention to body language, the questions they ask and any changes in behavior etc.)*

The Children: Answering Their Questions

TIP! *Remember some answers can wait. "I don't know," or "we're still gathering information," are both fair answers.*

What is a gene?

- Our bodies are made up of millions of cells. In nearly every cell, we have tens of thousands of genes
- Half of our genes come from our father and half from our mother
- Genes carry the instructions that tell our bodies how to grow and how to work
- Our genes affect what we look like, how we learn
- Our genes affect our chances of getting certain diseases
- A change in a gene is called a mutation

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- There are some mutations that cause a risk for certain types of cancer

Add your own words _____

What is BRCA 1/2 mutation?

- It stands for Breast Cancer 1 and Breast Cancer 2
- Mutations in BRCA 1/2 stop healthy genes from working correctly and can increase the risk to develop certain types of cancers

Add your own words _____

How does BRCA mutation affect me?

- It increases your risk of breast and ovarian cancer and other cancers
- You will have to think about risk reduction and screening

Add your own words _____

Will you get cancer?

- Having the mutation does not guarantee that you will get cancer
- I am part of regular screening to reduce this risk
- My risk has been reduced because I had (or will have) surgery

Add your own words _____

Is this why you had cancer?

- The BRCA mutation that I have increased my risk and likely contributed to the cancer

Add your own words _____

Why did you get BRCA mutation?

- A gene has been passed down in our family
- The passing down of a gene is not anyone's fault

Add your own words _____

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Will it go away?

- This is something you were born with and the BRCA mutation does not go away
- Although we cannot change the BRCA mutation, there are ways to manage the increase cancer risks

Add your own words _____

When would I get tested?

- You can have genetic testing when you are 18 years of age or older
- It is recommended that women consider genetic counselling around age 25 as screening can start this early
- For men, genetic counselling can be considered at the time of family planning or closer to the age of 40, and if they have children who are 18 years or older
- You may wish to speak with a genetic counselor to get more information
- Everyone is different in terms of if or when they want to know this information

Add your own words _____

Will my sibling/cousins get it?

- We don't know
- Testing will help us find out

Add your own words _____

If I inherit the mutation, will I get cancer?

- Not everyone who has a BRCA mutation gets cancer
- Having knowledge about the mutation provides choices for risk reduction

Add your own words _____

I look like and act like you, does that mean I will get the BRCA mutation too?

- Genes for looks and body types are inherited separately from cancer risk genes
- The only way to know is through testing

Add your own words _____

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Canadian
Cancer
Society

What did you choose to manage your risk?

- I decided to get prophylactic oophorectomy
- I decided to get a prophylactic double mastectomy
- Both
- I get regular screening and monitoring
- I take medication to reduce my risks

Add your own words _____

Checking in With Yourself: After the First Talk

TIP! *A check-in is ongoing.*

How did you feel about the talk?

What does my child understand about the information that we covered?

TIP! *If discussing BRCA mutation with more than one child at a time, consider how the information will move between your children as you decide whether they should hear it first separately, together, or a combination of both.*

Thoughts for ongoing conversations:
