

NHS Jewish BRCA Testing Programme Information for Health Care Professionals

Summary

On 30 January 2023, NHS England launched a three-year programme to offer genetic testing for BRCA mutations to men and women over 18 years old with Jewish ancestry (at least one Jewish grandparent) in England.

If anyone presents to primary care with questions about the programme, they should be given the link to the [information page](#) where they can register for a test, and advised they can call the genetic counselling hotline directly for support: 020 3437 6001 (the hotline is open Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 5:00pm, with extended hours to 7:00pm on Wednesdays).

Background

The NHS Jewish BRCA testing programme aims to identify more people with cancer predisposing genes and enrol them into appropriate screening and treatment pathways. This will lead to more cancers being prevented or detected earlier and contribute to the NHS Long Term Plan ambition to diagnose 75% of cancers at an early stage by 2028.

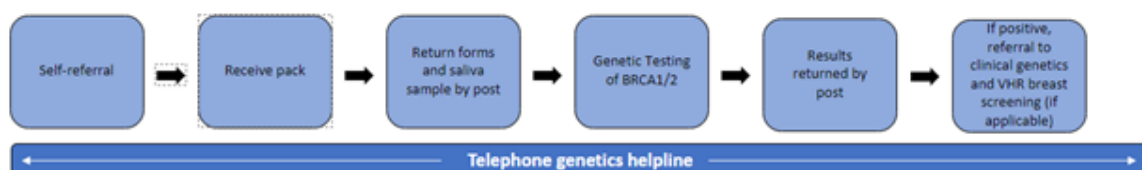
Having a BRCA mutation increases your risk of developing several cancers, in particular (for women), breast and ovarian cancer. We are targeting this community because people with Jewish ancestry are six times more likely to carry a BRCA mutation compared to the general population. Women found to be BRCA mutation carriers can have breast screening at a younger age through the Very High Risk Breast Cancer Screening Programme and may choose to have risk reducing surgery and/or access preventative medication.

Testing pathway

The programme has so far been a success. In the first year of the programme, 3887 Jewish people returned a saliva sample to be tested, 3166 results have been processed and 83 BRCA carriers found. All BRCA carriers are referred to their local clinical genetics service for onwards management.

The testing pathway (Figure 1) has been running smoothly. People don't have to leave their homes to be tested, anyone with at least one Jewish grandparent can register for a BRCA test online, a saliva kit is sent to their home address which they return alongside a consent form for genetic testing and the result is returned in the post. People are supported throughout the whole pathway with a Genetic Counsellor helpline managed by two NHS Genetics Counsellors.

Figure 1: Genetic Testing Pathway



On 31 January 2024 the programme fully launched. In collaboration with [Jnetics](#) and [Chai Cancer Care](#), the programme is delivering a national engagement campaign to the Jewish population in England to encourage people to take up the offer of a BRCA test.

Signposting

An [information page](#) about BRCA is available for those interested in the programme and those who want more information on the implications of a positive result and the support services available. Anyone interested in participating in the programme should be asked to complete [this registration form](#).

If people have questions, they can call the genetic counselling hotline directly for support: 020 3437 6001 (the hotline is open Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 5:00pm, with extended hours to 7:00pm on Wednesdays).

Genomics in Primary Care

The NHS Jewish BRCA testing programme has widened the eligibility criteria for BRCA testing for Jewish people, all people with at least one Jewish grandparent interested in BRCA testing should be encouraged to participate through the programme [registration form](#).

Further information on wider genomic testing within primary care for the general population is available through [the NHS England National Genomics Education programme](#).

Any questions?

If health care professionals have any questions about the programme, please contact susana.lukic@nhs.net for more information.