

What Your Genes Say About Your Prostate Cancer Risk



Knowing your family history and understanding your inherited risk are important steps you can take. It's another way to Check the Box for Your Health and encourage the people you love to do the same.

This Prostate Cancer Awareness Month, we've highlighted researchers studying prostate cancer and the families living with it. Today's focus is genetics: certain inherited gene mutations, passed from parent to child, can raise a person's risk of developing prostate cancer and shape how aggressively it behaves once it appears. For decades, this was one of the clearest questions prostate cancer research couldn't yet answer: why the disease runs in some families and not others.

[Know your family history. Know your risk. Check the Box for Your Health.](#)

Dr. Colin Pritchard has built his career studying that inheritance, helping physicians identify which patients carry higher inherited risk, often before a diagnosis is ever made. We asked him what he most wants patients and families to understand about the genetics of prostate cancer.

"Men get the same genes that women get in terms of cancer risk. So I think one of the biggest misunderstandings, a branding problem, really, is that the so-called breast cancer genes, BRCA1 and BRCA2, are also important for men. If you're a man or a woman and you know someone in your family who has a BRCA1 or BRCA2 mutation, you should get tested. You should tell your male relatives."

— Dr. Colin Pritchard

A BRCA1 or BRCA2 mutation found in a mother or sister carries the same weight for the fathers, brothers, and sons who share that bloodline, yet many families never make that connection, and research like Dr. Pritchard’s is what closes that gap by turning a misunderstood label into a clear next step: germline testing, and the earlier screening it can lead to. Every study that refines how that testing is used, and who should have access to it, exists because someone chose to fund it, and moves science closer to a day when families no longer mistake “breast cancer genes” for a risk that stops at gender, but understand them for what they are: a shared inheritance that belongs to everyone who carries them.

[Watch Dr. Pritchard’s full conversation on cancer genetics and inherited risk.](#)



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