Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# MSK CATCH: Expert advice on hereditary cancer syndromes

When you're at high risk for cancer because of the genes you were born with, you need as much support as possible. We're here to be your partner in managing your hereditary cancer syndrome while helping you live your best life. Our clinic is **MSK CATCH,** and our name stands for **Comprehensive Assessment, Treatment, and Prevention of Cancers with Hereditary Predispositions.**

## What's a hereditary cancer syndrome?

A hereditary cancer syndrome is caused by gene mutations that your parents passed down to you before you were born.

## What's the MSK CATCH Clinic? Am I eligible?

MSK CATCH is only for people living with a hereditary cancer syndrome. They are at high risk for cancer, and our clinic monitors them closely over a long period of time to see if cancer is developing. This process is called surveillance. If your genetic tests show you may need special screening and treatment, it's important that your healthcare team is highly experienced at managing hereditary cancer risk.

You're only eligible for MSK CATCH if you've already had genetic testing and counseling, so that we know surveillance is right for you.

## What are the benefits of a surveillance clinic?

Close surveillance and regular cancer screenings help find cancer early when it's easier to treat. Surveillance doesn't prevent cancer. But early detection gives you a better chance of survival and quality of life. For example, 9 out of 10

people with colon cancer survive when it's caught during an early stage. But only about 2 out of 10 people survive if it's not caught early.

It's important to understand your personal risk of getting cancer, and also the possible benefits, risks, and side effects of lowering that risk through surgery and other options.

## What happens during my first visit?

We'll give you a personal surveillance plan that's right for your cancer syndrome. It will have screening recommendations from MSK experts to manage your condition. MSK CATCH will also:

- Explain your genetic mutation
- Evaluate your risk for cancer
- Make personal recommendations about cancer prevention
- Connect you with MSK surgeons to learn if surgery to prevent cancer is right for you
- Give you educational resources

## If I have a hereditary cancer syndrome diagnosis, should my family members get screened?

Although we have not identified genetic causes for all types of cancer, gene mutations can be passed down from parent to child that raise the risk of getting a disease. Your blood relatives could be at higher risk for cancer. We'll help you understand who's at risk in your family and how to talk with them about cancer. We'll discuss options for getting your family members tested.

# Our experts:

- Rob Sidlow, MD
  *BRCA1* and *BRCA2* mutations in males, and other hereditary cancer syndromes
- Dennis Chi, MD, Surgical Director, MSK CATCH
  Gynecologic surgery

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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