

## Benita's Story



Benita with her son

Benita says: *"With the help of God and Moffitt Cancer Center, I survived breast cancer. Now I want to give back – and give more. I'm part of a Moffitt research program in hereditary screening for African American women. There's not a lot of data on why Black women are predisposed to this kind of cancer. People who will walk in my shoes will benefit because of this research."*

Benita had breast cancer at age 37, at which time her sister was already diagnosed with breast cancer at age 35.

She pursued *BRCA1* and *BRCA2* testing through one of our research studies, which revealed an alteration in one of these genes.

She took measures to reduce her risks of future cancer through medical options she was given based on the results of her genetic test.

Benita has a teenage son who may someday benefit from this information.

Sadly, Benita's grandmother recently passed from what is believed to be ovarian cancer – although Benita told her grandmother about genetic testing, she chose not to have it.

## How do I get more information?



[inheritedcancer.net](http://inheritedcancer.net)

(615) 875-2444

[ICARE@inheritedcancer.net](mailto:ICARE@inheritedcancer.net)

Follow us to stay informed!



This brochure was developed as part of the Breast Cancer Genetics Research and Education for African American Women Team (B-GREAT), currently hosted by ICARE.

More information is available at:

[bgreatinitiative.inheritedcancer.net](http://bgreatinitiative.inheritedcancer.net)



Find a genetic counselor near you!

[nsgc.org/findageneticcounselor](http://nsgc.org/findageneticcounselor)

Based at:



Developed at:



## The Family Link Between Breast And Ovarian Cancer In Black Women



Supported by:



## What is unique about breast cancer in Black women?

- ◆ Black women:
  - Have the highest death rate from breast cancer compared to any other racial or ethnic group.
  - Black women develop breast cancer more often than White women below the age of 35.
- ◆ In Black women, breast cancer which “runs in families,” may:
  - Occur at a younger age.
  - Take on a more aggressive form (e.g., triple negative breast cancer, basal-like breast cancer).

## What is the role of genes in breast cancer which “runs in families?”

7-10% of breast and ovarian cancers are due to changes in the *BRCA* genes (*BRCA1* and *BRCA2*).

These changes can be passed down from either the mother or the father.

- ◆ A *BRCA* gene change can lead to:
  - Breast cancer at a younger age and/or in both breasts.
  - Many family members with breast and/or ovarian cancers.
  - Aggressive breast cancers (e.g., triple negative breast cancer, basal-like breast cancer).



## Evora's Story



**Evora with her two sisters, all of whom are breast cancer survivors**

Evora says: *“Pursuing genetic testing was important to me because the more you know about your family history, the better you are able to prepare for a healthier life. For me, the unknown is worse than the known...knowledge is power. As a breast cancer survivor, I wanted to know if I was a carrier of the mutation, which would help clarify what was in store for me and my daughters. I am determined to encourage women of color who have survived breast cancer to participate in genetic testing, so that they will have that knowledge.”*

Evora was diagnosed at age 51. Her twin sister was diagnosed with breast cancer at age 40. Another sister was recently diagnosed in her late 70s. Evora has two daughters, who are now in their 30s.

Genetic testing for the *BRCA1* and *BRCA2* genes gives Evora the opportunity to leave her daughters and other family members a legacy, as results of testing could help them make health-related decisions.

## How can I get information about breast cancer which “runs in families?”

- Ask your health care provider about local genetics services.
- Refer to the back of this brochure for additional resources.

## What happens if I go see a genetics professional?

- Your personal and family cancer history will be reviewed.
- They will help you decide if *BRCA* testing is right for you.

## What is involved with *BRCA* testing?

- Your blood is drawn and sent to the lab.
- Results are generally available in a few weeks.
- The price varies and may or may not be covered by your insurance company.
- Ask your health care provider for more information on genetic testing, privacy issues, and insurance coverage.

## How could genetic testing help me or my family members?

- May help to understand the chances that you or your family members might develop breast and/or ovarian cancer.
- May provide information to select medical options to address your risks.