

During the 51<sup>st</sup> Triennium, our thoughts are centered around “The Family of God Marching Together.”

If you have a family history of **breast, ovarian, uterine, prostate, or colorectal cancer**, you may have a higher risk for these cancers. Any first-degree relative (parent, sibling, or child) who was diagnosed before age 50 with ovarian, uterine, breast, or colorectal cancer is at high risk and needs to be tested and diagnosed.

## Family Health History and Cancer

### What Information Do I Need?

Gather information about yourself and your—

- Parents and grandparents.
- Sisters and brothers.
- Children.
- Aunts, uncles, nieces, and nephews.

Information should include—

- Who had cancer and what kind?
- How old were they when they were diagnosed?
- Are they still living? If not, at what age did they die and what caused their death?

### How Do I Collect Family Health History Information?

Take time to ask about your family history of cancer at family gatherings. Respectfully ask your relatives to help fill in the gaps and confirm what you remember. Also, look through any family records or obituaries.

You can enter your family health history into [My Family Health Portrait](#), update it over time, and print it out to share with your doctor and relatives.

### Do I Have a Higher Risk of Getting Cancer?

If you have a family history of breast, ovarian, uterine, or colorectal cancer, you may have a higher risk for these cancers.

Tell your doctor if—

- Any first-degree relative (parent, sibling, or child) was diagnosed before age 50 with ovarian, uterine, breast, or colorectal cancer.
- Two or more other relatives (grandparents, aunts, uncles, nieces, or nephews) on either your mother’s or father’s side had ovarian, uterine, breast, or colorectal cancer.
- A male relative had breast cancer.

Telling your doctor about your family health history is a first step to find out if you may have a higher cancer risk. It will help you and your doctor decide what tests you need, when to start,

and how often to be tested. Knowing your family health history also helps you and your doctor decide if genetic counseling or testing may be right for you.

### **What Is Genetic Counseling and Testing?**

If your family health history suggests that you may carry a genetic mutation, your doctor can refer you to genetic counseling.

A *genetic counselor* is a specialist who asks you about your family's health history and helps you decide if genetic testing is right for you. A *genetic test* uses your saliva or blood to look at your DNA. This can show if you have mutations (changes) that may raise your cancer risk.

### **What Should I Do If I Have a Genetic Mutation?**

Having a genetic mutation does not mean you will get cancer. You can do things to lower or manage your cancer risk. Talk to your doctor about—

- **Tests.** You may need to start getting screening tests earlier and get tested more often than other people.
- **Medicine or surgery** that could lower your cancer risk.
- **Making healthy choices** like quitting smoking, not drinking alcohol, exercising regularly, and keeping a healthy weight.

### **Which Hereditary Conditions Raise My Chances of Getting Cancer?**

Several hereditary conditions can raise your chances of getting cancer. Two of the most common are hereditary breast and ovarian cancer (HBOC) syndrome and Lynch syndrome.

- People with HBOC syndrome have a higher risk for breast, ovarian, high-grade prostate, and pancreatic cancer.
- People with Lynch syndrome have a higher risk for colorectal, uterine, and ovarian cancers.

Learn about medical options for people with HBOC syndrome or Lynch syndrome.

My Sisters and my Brothers, please notify your children, grandchildren, nieces and Nephews of any potential hazard they may be facing. It could save a life!

**\$1.00 from the sale of each "Triennium" Medallion will be donated to Cancer Research!**