

## Genetic Testing and Breast Cancer: Unlocking Family Secrets

“After my genetic testing results, I felt informed in a way that I hadn’t experienced before in relation to cancer and its impact on my body and my family.”

**KELLIE GOSS**

*Advocate for genetic testing*



### Kellie Goss’ Story

Kellie Goss’ mom is a two-time breast cancer survivor, and Kellie worried she’d be next. She took action by having genetic counseling and testing done and was able to reduce her risk of breast cancer.

[READ KELLIE’S STORY](#)



### Knowing your history can help determine your future health

Black women die of breast cancer at higher rates than white women. And breast cancer occurs in young Black women at higher rates than in young white women. Why? Many possible reasons exist.

You may have an **inherited gene mutation\*** that increases your risk of breast cancer and don’t know it. **Genetic testing\*** can help you learn if you have an inherited gene mutation. Yet Black women don’t get genetic testing as often as white women.

*\***Genes** contain the code for things like eye color or skin color.*

*\***Genetic mutations** are changes that can occur during a lifetime that can put us at risk of cancer and other diseases.*

*\***Inherited gene mutations** are passed down to a child from their mother and father.*

*\***Genetic testing** for breast cancer looks for the most common changes, or mutations, in the genes linked to breast cancer using a blood or saliva sample.*

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## Resources:

### Susan G. Komen®

1-877 GO KOMEN  
(1-877-465-6636)

[komen.org/genetic-testing](https://komen.org/genetic-testing)  
[My Family Health History](#)



### Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered, Inc. (FORCE)

1-866-824-7475  
[facingourrisk.org](https://facingourrisk.org)

### National Cancer Institute

1-800-4-CANCER  
[cancer.gov](https://cancer.gov)

### National Society of Genetic Counselors, Inc.

1-312-321-6834  
[nsgc.org](https://nsgc.org)

## Why don't Black women get tested?

- You aren't offered testing as often as white women. This may be related to the history of systemic racism within the health care system.
- You may not know about genetic testing.
- You may not feel empowered to ask for genetic testing if it isn't offered.
- You may fear misuse of your genetic information because of a history of unethical practices within the health care system.
- You may just not want to know.

But with knowledge comes power. If you know some **genetic mutations\*** are linked to breast cancer, and there's an inherited gene mutation in your family, there are things you can do to lower your breast cancer risk.

## What can I do to find out more?

1. Talk to both sides of your family about your health history. Black women often take the lead in caring for and encouraging families to embrace healthy choices. Once your family starts talking, you may learn things you've never heard before. Use the [Family Health History](#) tool to gather this information.
2. Talk with your doctor about your family history. Ask if genetic testing could be right for you. Ask if talking with a genetic counselor could help you decide. Advocate for yourself and speak up.
3. Talk with a **genetic counselor** to help you:
  - Decide if genetic testing is right for you.
  - Learn what you could expect from the results.
  - Understand how the results could help you and your family.

If you decide to get tested, you can talk with a genetic counselor about when and how you would get the results, who will help you understand the results, how they will be used for your care and how to share this information with your family.