Some breast cancers are hereditary, caused by genes with mutations, or changes, passed down from either parent to their daughters or sons.

Genetic testing at any stage, even when the disease has spread beyond the breast to other parts of the body, known as metastatic disease, can determine if breast cancer is hereditary. Genetic test results are also an important factor in helping inform treatment decisions.

Understanding Hereditary Breast Cancer

According to national guidelines, people with any of these risk factors* should consider speaking with a cancer genetics professional about getting a blood test to see if their breast cancer is hereditary5,6:

- **Age**
  - Diagnosed with breast cancer before 50

- **Multiple Breast Cancers**
  - Breast cancer in both breasts or a second breast cancer in the same breast

- **Triple-Negative Breast Cancer**
  - Diagnosed with triple-negative (ER-/PR-/HER2-) breast cancer before 60

- **Heritage**
  - Ashkenazi (Eastern European) Jewish, African American, or Hispanic heritage, among others

- **Family History**
  - Relatives with breast, ovarian, pancreatic, or prostate cancer, or melanoma

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*These are just some of the risk factors that should be considered.

*ER: estrogen receptor; PR: progesterone receptor
HER2: human epidermal growth factor receptor 2
It is important to know if breast cancer is hereditary because it can help people living with breast cancer take control of emotional considerations, including:

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Speaking with a genetic counselor, doctor, or nurse navigator can help people with breast cancer, including those with metastatic disease, make decisions about genetic testing.

These individuals can also help people who test positive for a hereditary mutation feel empowered, cope with the results and determine a treatment plan.

Learn how to start the conversation about genetic testing and more about hereditary breast cancers at www.StoryHalfTold.com.