



ASL Cancer Genetics

Module 1

English Transcript

Do you want to learn about your risk for cancer? To do so it is important to know your family history. You can learn about your family history by creating a family tree.

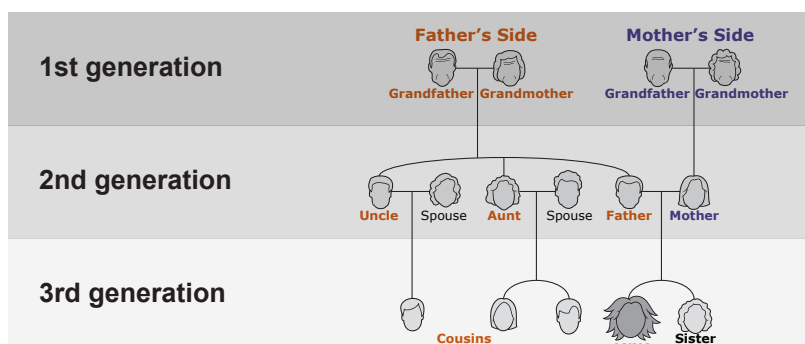
The woman wearing blue is Anna and she is 28 years old. This is her family. We will use her family to explain cancer risk.

Anna is concerned about the possible risk of inherited cancer in her family. Several people in her family have had cancer. To figure out risk for inherited cancer it is important to ask questions. Who has cancer? What type of cancer is it? How old was the person when the doctor diagnosed the cancer?



This information can help us find out if Anna and her family are at risk for inherited cancer.

Look at how we use Anna's family to make a family tree. This family tree has three generations. On the left, we have Anna's family on her father's side. On the right is Anna's family on her mother's side. This is Anna's family tree. In the family tree, squares are used for males and circles are females.



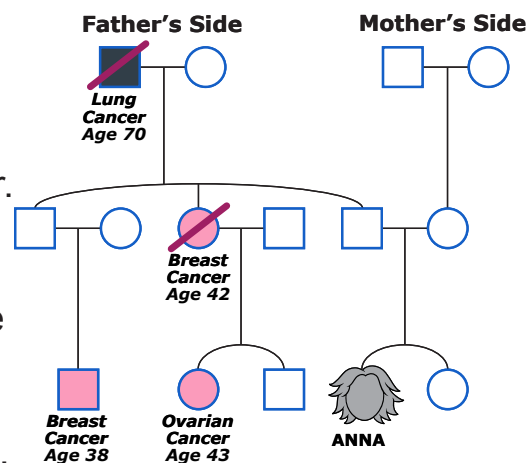
The **1st generation**, in the top row of the family tree, is Anna's grandparents.

The **2nd generation**, in the middle row, includes Anna's parents and her aunts and uncles with their husbands, wives, or partners.

In the **3rd generation**, in the bottom row, there are Anna, her sister, and her cousins. All of this together is Anna's family tree. We will use Anna's family tree to help Anna investigate who in her family has cancer and what cancer they have. A family tree makes it easy to see who has cancer.

To identify the different cancers we use different colors. For example, dark grey is used in the upper left corner to represent lung cancer. If you look at the bottom left, we use pink to represent either breast or ovarian cancer.

Knowing how old the person was when diagnosed with cancer is important. Anna's family tree includes the age when each person was diagnosed with cancer. There is a line through the circle or square if Anna's relative has died, whether or not cancer was the cause of death.



Anna's family tree is now finished. People tend to think that breast and ovarian cancer are passed down only by women. This is not true. These cancers can be passed down from fathers or mothers.

In Anna's family, the people with cancer are on her father's side of the family. That is why **it is important to collect information from BOTH sides of the family.**

In this project we use breast and ovarian cancer as an example. This information can apply to other cancers too, such as colon or uterine cancer.

Now you can create your own family tree. You can talk with your family members. They can help you get the information you will need.

1. Identify the people in your family
 2. Find out who in the family had cancer
 3. Find out the type of cancer they had
 4. Find out how old they were when diagnosed with cancer
 5. Find out who in the family has died, and their age when they died
- You can do this yourself, or go to the *National Society of Genetic Counselors* website (www.nsgc.org) to learn more about making a family tree.
- You can also meet with a genetic counselor to discuss how to make your family tree.

In the next module we will discuss how to identify risk factors for inherited cancer.