



Cancer Care

APRIL 2025

These genetic counselors are standing by at Duke Cancer Institute, ready to answer questions about genetic testing for individuals and families.

How Cascade Testing Reduced a Family's Cancer Risk

By D'Ann George

When her surgeon recommended genetic testing for her thyroid cancer, Gail Gunter didn't hesitate. The testing, done through Duke Cancer Institute's [Cancer Genetics Program](#), would tell her and her surgeon, Randall Scheri, MD, more about her risk for developing future cancers. They would reveal whether a gene mutation had caused her cancer.

And since some mutations can run in families, the test results could also benefit her five siblings, through part of the program called cascade testing. Cascade testing would look for the same mutation in Gunter's close relatives. Finding the mutation could increase their chances of finding cancer — and surviving it — by catching it early.

First, though, Gunter would have to convince them to get tested.

Talking to Family about Getting Tested

"Telling your family that you have a cancer-causing gene

mutation that they should get tested for isn't always easy," said Jennifer Halleck, MS, CGC, a genetics counselor at Duke Cancer Institute. "For many reasons, it can be overwhelming to share this kind of health information with family — estranged relationships, large families spread across the country, and concerns around privacy, to name a few."

Halleck said that genetics counselors offer several resources to get the conversation started. For example, they will draft a personalized letter to your family members with information about your gene change and associated cancer risk. Details will describe the benefits of testing as well as how and where to get tested. Possible testing sites include Duke, out of state, and at home through a mail-in kit.

Halleck is one of five full-time genetic counselors who help people understand the test and connect with an oncologist, if necessary. Counseling can be in-person or virtual.

Continued on page 2

Cancer Support Services

Continued from page 1


Gunter's Siblings Get Tested

Gunter knew that most of her siblings would follow her nudge to get tested. "I'm number five in our sibling line up, but they call me the boss," she said. "And we always share important health information. We're close like that because we grew up working together on a tobacco farm in Vance County, North Carolina.

She said the letters from Jennifer Halleck helped. "This is very complicated information, and I was glad not to have to explain it all to them," she said.

Two of her sisters and one brother tested positive for the mutation. The three turned out to have early-stage cancer, and the sisters recently had their thyroid glands removed. "They were having the same symptoms as me — fatigue and moodiness. But they didn't know cancer was causing that. Now we are all feeling much better. My brother gets his surgery soon," she said.

To learn more about Cancer Genetics visit duke.is/cancergenetics.



Support services are offered both in-person and remotely. Please call 919.684.4497 for more information.

dukecancerinstitute.org

Duke Cancer Institute offers a variety of cancer support and survivorship services for patients and their loved ones to assist with navigating life during and after cancer treatment. Our goal is to shape the future of cancer survivorship and improve the quality of life throughout treatment.

Patient and Nurse Navigation

Navigators support patients, families, and caregivers through their cancer care. They make sure you have information to make decisions and advocate for your needs. They identify barriers to care and connect you with available resources, as needed. Our navigators support you all the way from diagnosis to end of treatment. If you are interested in learning more, contact your healthcare team and ask what Navigation services are available to you.

Clinical Social Work

Oncology and palliative care social workers help patients and their loved ones cope with emotional and practical concerns. They identify and address specific needs, working to alleviate stressors and financial burdens associated with a cancer diagnosis. Then they connect you and your loved ones with resources such as disability, home health/hospice, advance directives and end-of-life care. To learn more, contact your healthcare team and ask about Clinical Social Work services.

Cancer Nutrition

Our registered dietitians specialize in oncology and help to prevent and treat malnutrition, restore digestive health, and minimize the side effects of your cancer treatment. To learn more, contact your healthcare team

and ask about cancer nutrition services.

Chaplain Services & Education

Duke chaplains are on site seven days a week to offer spiritual support to you and your loved ones. When requested, they connect you with faith-specific representatives from the community. To learn more, contact Chaplain Services & Education at Duke Cancer Institute locations by visiting dukehealth.org/support-services/pastoral-services.

Therapy and Counseling

Our medical family therapists provide individual, couples, and family therapy. They help you and your loved ones cope with the impact of cancer, all at no cost. Psychiatry and psychology services are also available and offered as part of our treatment for emotional, psychological, and relational issues associated with a cancer diagnosis. To learn more, visit duke.is/c/b47z.

Sexual Health Services

Sexual health services explain the impact cancer treatments can have on sexual health and intimacy. They help you address concerns surrounding sexual function, sexual feelings, intimacy, and changes in sexual health. To learn more, contact your healthcare team and ask about sexual health services.

Quit at Duke

Quit at Duke is a program designed to help people quit using tobacco products. Services are provided by tobacco treatment specialists and behavioral medicine clinicians. For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call 919.613.QUIT (7848). To learn more, visit dukehealth.org/quit.

Survivorship Services

They partner with you and your loved ones to achieve healthy, fulfilling lives beyond cancer. Areas of care that are addressed include assessment and management of both physical and emotional needs that may result from the cancer experience, cancer screenings and monitoring, and counseling related to prevention and health promotion. We offer a number of clinical and supportive services. For more information, call 919.668.2122. To learn more, visit duke.is/survivorshippervices.

Teen and Young Adult Oncology Program

They provide teen and young adult patients (ages 15 to 29) and their loved ones with support and community during a cancer diagnosis, treatment, and survivorship. The program offers specialized medical care; individual, couples and family therapy; peer connection; and activity-based groups, both in the medical center and in the community. To learn more, visit dukehealth.org/TYAO.

Palliative Care

This team helps with symptoms such as shortness of breath, pain, nausea, constipation, fatigue, anxiety, depression, trouble sleeping, and other experiences keeping you from feeling your best. The team works closely with you, your loved ones, and your doctors to ensure that your medical care reflects what is most important to you. To schedule an appointment, call 919.668.6688, option #7. To learn more, visit dukehealth.org/treatments/palliative-care.

Self-Image Services

Our self-image consultants offer a variety of services and products to assist individuals with changes in body-image experienced during cancer treatment and survivorship. If you are interested in a self-image consultation, at one of our three locations, call 919.613.1906 or email cancersupport@duke.edu. To learn more, visit duke.is/self-image.

Child and Adolescent Life Services

They focus on supporting the emotional and developmental needs of children and teens in families who are facing cancer. They hold individual education sessions to support parents while they take the lead in helping their children understand a cancer diagnosis, treatment, side effects, and changes in their family life. To learn more, visit duke.is/cals.

Do you want to receive this newsletter monthly by email? Scan the QR code to [subscribe](#) today.



Scan to learn more or visit duke.is/n8h92



Available Legal Resources

Duke Law School will provide free pro bono legal information on

three North Carolina health care planning documents: General Power of Attorney; Health Care Power of Attorney; and Advanced Directive for a Natural Death. These documents provide important protections in the event a person is unable to express their wishes or conduct business on their own behalf. Join us on Wednesday April 9, from 6 to 7 p.m. via Zoom to learn if these documents may be right for you and have the opportunity to ask questions. No registration is required. Zoom Link: duke.is/DukeLaw4-9-25.

Support Groups

Duke Cancer Patient Support Program's virtual support groups are professionally facilitated. Attendees have an opportunity to meet people in a similar situation, share their experience and get support, tips, and ideas from those who understand what they are going through. Registration is required. To learn more, call 919.684.4497. Scan the QR code to register for support groups.

All times listed are in Eastern Daylight Time.



Art Therapy at Nasher

Wednesday :: April 9
2 to 3:30 p.m.

Second Wednesday of the month

This **group** is open to patients and caregivers and is located at the Nasher Museum of Art in Durham. No art experience is needed. For more information and to register, visit duke.is/nn4gr.

Blood and Marrow Transplant Survivorship Support Group

Wednesday :: April 16
4 to 5:30 p.m.

Third Wednesday of the month

The **group** is for patients and caregivers.

To register, visit duke.is/mhc7m.

Breast & GYN Cancers

Tuesday :: April 8
5:30 to 7 p.m.

Second Tuesday of the month

The **group** is for patients only. To register, visit duke.is/mhc7m.

Caregiver Support Group

Thursday :: April 17, 6 to 7 p.m.

Third Thursday of the month

To register for this **group**, visit duke.is/mhc7m.

General Cancer Support

Thursday :: April 17
5 to 6 p.m.

Third Thursday of the month

This **group** is for patients only.

Topics include communicating, finding information, making decisions, solving problems negotiating, and standing up for your rights. To register, visit duke.is/mhc7m.

LGBTQIA+ Cancer Support

Wednesday :: April 23
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Fourth Wednesday of the month

The **group** is for patients and caregivers. To register, visit duke.is/mhc7m.

Metastatic Cancer Support Group for Women

Wednesday :: April 16
3 to 4:30 p.m.

Third Wednesday of the month

The **group** is for patients only. To register, visit duke.is/mhc7m.

Parenting with Cancer Meetup

Tuesday :: April 15
7:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Third Tuesday of the month

The **group** is for parents with cancer and their caregivers, who have young children and/or teens. To register, visit duke.is/mhc7m.

Prostate Cancer Support

Monday :: April 28
4 to 6 p.m.

Fourth Monday of the month

The **group** is for patients and caregivers. To register, visit duke.is/mhc7m.

KidsCAN!

KidsCAN! is a program designed to support children and teens, ages 4 to 18, who have a parent or significant caregiver living with a diagnosis of cancer. Monthly meetups focus on issues such as understanding cancer, changes in the family life, feelings, self-care, memories, cooperation, love and family. KidsCAN! (ages 4–10 years) meets virtually on the second Monday of the month, April 14 at 6:30 p.m. KidsCAN! Tweens and Teens (ages 11–18 years) meets virtually on the third Monday of the month, April 21 at 6:30 p.m.



Registration is required. For more information about KidsCAN!, visit duke.is/m/vv4y.

TYAO

Teen and Young Adult
Oncology Program

Join us for our TYAO **young adult cancer meetup** (18–39 yrs old) on the fourth Tuesday of the month, April 22 from 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. Email TYAO@Duke.edu for more information and to register. Check out our Instagram for updates and upcoming events.



@duketyao

Rest, Relax, Renew

The Duke Cancer Patient Support Program provides services and resources to help support patients and their loved ones. For a list of complimentary services, visit dukehealth.org/cancersupport or call 919.684.4497.



Virtual Tai Chi
Fridays :: April 4 & 18
2:30 to 3:15 p.m.
First and Third Friday of the month
Join Dr. Jay Dunbar, founder and director of The Magic Tortoise Taijiquan School, is a virtual [Tai Chi class](#) for cancer patients and survivors. Visit duke.is/8mues to learn more and to register.

Virtual Yoga
Tuesdays :: April 8 & 22
Noon to 1 p.m.
Second and Fourth Tuesday of the month
Join certified Yoga for Cancer instructor Laura Woodall in a [class](#) designed specifically for cancer patients and survivors. Visit duke.is/7jgt3 to learn more and to register.

Mind-Body Approaches to Coping with Cancer
Tuesdays :: April 1 & 15
Noon to 12:45 p.m.
First and Third Tuesday of the month
Mindfulness can be a powerful tool to manage the stress that can accompany living with and life after cancer. These [virtual sessions](#) teach mind and body approaches to coping with cancer. Through the focus on the breath and the present moment, patients and their caregivers will

learn to discover how to respond rather than react to life's stressors. For more information and to register, visit duke.is/gzsvt.

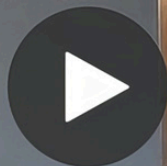
Explore the Power of Your Voice for Healing
Mondays :: April 7 & 21
Noon to 1 p.m.
First and Third Monday of the month
In this [workshop](#) you will explore breathing techniques, vocal toning, and chanting. These tools and techniques, when used daily, encourage mindful attention to one's heart and voice. Experience the health benefits of sound, vibration, and self-expression. Visit duke.is/mn7m9 to learn more and to register.

Exercise Consultations
Mondays :: 2 to 4 p.m.
Wednesdays :: 8:30 to 11:30 a.m.
Supportive Care & Survivorship Center offers

[exercise consultations](#) by exercise physiologists. These personalized sessions are available to oncology patients and survivors at no cost. Video chat or phone sessions are available on Mondays between 2:00 and 4:00 p.m. and Wednesdays between 8:30 and 11:30 a.m. To learn more or to register email DHFCCancerExercise@dm.duke.edu or visit duke.is/82cne.

Salon Services
Mondays :: April 7 & 28
First and Fourth Monday of the month
10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Our volunteer team of expert hair stylists provide private consultations at the Belk Boutique in Durham at no cost. They offer dry cuts for your hair or a head shave. Our stylists can also assist with wig styling, cutting, and general wig care. To learn more, visit duke.is/n/8mu6.

Duke University Hospital
Cancer Center



Beyond Cancer:
Confronting the Challenges of Survivorship



MEDSCAPE SERIES

This series discusses how our innovative approach of providing onco-primary care, along with collaborative research efforts, has informed improvements in screening, treatment, and post-treatment oncology care.

New Episode: An Equitable Approach



duke.is/4/qm9r



Duke Cancer Institute

APRIL 2025

Duke Cancer Institute Virtual Support and Activity Groups

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|--|--|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| | 1 Mind/Body Approaches Coping with Cancer | 2 | 3 | 4 Tai Chi |
| 7 Explore the Power of Voice | 8 Yoga Breast & GYN Cancer Support | 9 Art Therapy at Nasher Duke Legal Seminar | 10 | 11 |
| 14 KidsCAN! (4–10) | 15 Mind/Body Approaches Coping with Cancer Parenting with Cancer Meetup | 16 Women’s Metastatic Cancer Support BMT Survivorship Support | 17 Caregiver Support Group General Cancer Support Group | 18 Tai Chi |
| 21 Explore the Power of Voice KidsCAN! Tweens and Teens | 22 Yoga Young Adult Meetup (18-39) | 23 LGBTQIA+ Cancer Support Group | 24 | 25 |
| 28 Prostate Cancer Support | 29 | 30 | For more information and to register, visit dukehealth.org/cancersupport or call 919.684.4497 To make a gift to support our no charge services, visit gifts.duke.edu/cancersupport | |