

Mayo Clinic Medical Edge

N34 Breast Cancer Sisters

Intro: Twelve-percent. That’s the risk most women have of getting breast cancer in their lifetime. But if you test positive for one of two known breast cancer genes, that risk shoots up to as high as 80-percent. The sisters you’re about to meet tested positive for a breast cancer gene. But they chose different ways of dealing with that information. That’s good news, because it means if you have the gene and want to reduce your risk of getting breast cancer, you have options.

Video

Audio

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| Tovah Carson Has breast cancer gene | “My mother was diagnosed at age 47. She had the test done.” |
| Voice of Vivien Williams | She was positive for BRCA1, a gene that greatly increases the risk of breast, ovarian and other cancers. |
| Sky Holt Has breast cancer gene | “It was really important with the family history that we have that we get the test done.” |
| Voice of Vivien Williams | Like their mom, sisters Tovah Carson and Sky Holt both tested positive for the gene. But they chose very different ways of dealing with that information. |
| Sky Holt Has breast cancer gene | “My husband and I had long conversations and made the decision that if I tested positive that we were going to go full board with all of the surgeries.” |
| Voice of Vivien Williams | Complete hysterectomy and double mastectomy with reconstruction. Even with that decision made, Sky had wondered. |
| Sky Holt Has breast cancer gene | “Am I going to still feel like a woman? Am I going to feel incomplete or not whole? I don’t feel that way.” |
| Voice of Vivien Williams | Prophylactic surgery followed by yearly check-ups was the right choice for Sky. |
| Tovah Carson | “I decided for now I’m going to do |

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| Has breast cancer gene | surveillance.” |
| Voice of Vivien Williams | Every six months Tovah has a mammogram and/or an MRI to screen for breast cancer. But because there are no good screening tools for ovarian cancer, she did have a complete hysterectomy. |
| Voice of Vivien Williams | Mayo Clinic Dr. Sandhya Pruthi says both surgery and surveillance are viable options. |
| Sandhya Pruthi, M.D. Mayo Clinic General Internal Medicine | “There’s good evidence that women who have that intensive surveillance, close follow-up, if the cancer was detected, it would be caught very early and these women actually have similar survivals to those who have had prophylactic mastectomy. “ |
| Voice of Vivien Williams | It’s all a matter of personal preference. Some people with family histories that suggest there might be a gene may not be sure they should get tested. Sky and Tovah say for them, it was crucial to know. |
| Tovah Carson Has breast cancer gene | “Then you can make informed decisions. You don’t have to sit and wonder what if.” |
| | For Mayo Clinic News Network, I’m Vivien Williams. |

Anchor tag:

Genetic testing involves consultations with a genetics counselor and a blood test.

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