

## **Atrium Health Navicent's Genetic Testing Can Help You Determine Your Cancer Risk**

*Cutting-edge genetic testing is available at Atrium Health Navicent Peyton Anderson Cancer Center*

**MACON, Ga., Aug. 15, 2023** – When cancer is inherited, it's due to a genetic defect called a mutation. According to the American Cancer Society, between 5 percent and 10 percent of all cancers are inherited. If you have a family history of cancer, you don't have to live in fear. Genetic counselors at [Atrium Health Navicent Peyton Anderson Cancer Center](#) can determine your risk and help you determine next steps.

Genetic counselors are health care professionals who have specialized training in genetics. The skilled counselors at Atrium Health Navicent specialize in hereditary cancer risk. Understanding your inherited risk starts with scheduling a genetic counseling session, which includes assessing family history.

"It's a win anytime we can prevent or detect cancer early," said Dr. Katie McQueen Amaker, an Atrium Health Navicent medical oncologist. "Genetic testing is just one more tool that we can use to help individuals with a family history of cancer have a choice to be more proactive about their health care, allowing them to take preventative measures or seek other intervention. Furthermore, it can be helpful for patients without a family history of cancer who have a high-risk cancer that predisposes their children to developing cancer in the future. Information is power, not only for the patients but also their families."

Individuals most likely to benefit from genetic testing are those who have personal or family history of cancer that could suggest an inherited risk:

- Cancer before age 45.
- Two or more individuals with the same type of cancer or types that can be linked to the same gene, such as breast, ovarian, pancreatic and prostate cancer; and colon, uterine, stomach and urinary tract cancers.
- Rare cancers like male breast cancer, medullary thyroid cancer or paraganglioma and pheochromocytoma.

Genetic testing can address risks for a wide range of cancers, including:

- Breast
- Ovarian
- Colon
- Pancreatic
- Uterine
- Prostate

After testing, counselors discuss what the genetic testing results may mean for you and your family, and if applicable, next steps such as referral to specialized providers for ongoing screening and prevention.

"The information gleaned from genetic testing can be lifesaving. It's so fortunate that people don't have to go far to take advantage of this specialized testing available at Atrium Health Navicent Peyton Anderson Cancer Center," said Claire Arnold, a licensed genetic counselor at Atrium Health Navicent. "I tell people to learn what you can on your own about your family history and talk to your family physician. If you feel you could benefit from genetic cancer testing, we're a phone call away."

Atrium Health Navicent Peyton Anderson Cancer Center offers a full continuum of services ranging from prevention and diagnosis to treatment and survivorship.

To learn more or to schedule an appointment with a cancer genetic counselor at Atrium Health Navicent, call 478-633-6270. A referral is not required.

#### **About Atrium Health Navicent**

Atrium Health Navicent is the leading provider of health care in central and south Georgia and is committed to its mission of elevating health and well-being through compassionate care. Atrium Health Navicent is part of [Advocate Health](#), which is headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina, and is the third-largest nonprofit health system in the United States, created from the combination of Atrium Health and Advocate Aurora Health. Atrium Health Navicent provides high-quality, personalized care in 53 specialties at more than 50 facilities throughout the region. As part of the largest, integrated, nonprofit health system in the Southeast, it is also able to tap into some of the nation's leading medical experts and specialists with Atrium Health, allowing it to provide the best care close to home – including advanced innovations in virtual medicine and care. Throughout its 125-year history in the community, Atrium Health Navicent has remained dedicated to enhancing health and wellness for individuals throughout the region through nationally recognized quality care, community health initiatives and collaborative partnerships. It is also one of the leading teaching hospitals in the region, helping to ensure viability for rural health care for the next generation. For more information, please visit [www.NavicentHealth.org](http://www.NavicentHealth.org).

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