

## 37-year-old woman susceptible to breast cancer risk undergoes preventive surgery

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Positive family support and best of medical advice helped a 37-year-old Riti from West Delhi's Janakpuri take a very bold step which has changed her life forever. As a preventive step to avoid development of breast and ovarian cancer, she underwent voluntary bilateral mastectomy and removal of her ovaries.

Presenting her case to spread awareness about this unusual situation, Max Healthcare, Vaishali, organised a press conference today to highlight the fact that the stakes are very high in those detected with a mutation in their genes.

Genetic mutation of BRCA 1 (gene associated with breast cancer) running in her family, her elder sister was recently diagnosed with breast cancer in Canada and her mother had already had two encounters with breast cancer once in 1997 and then in the other breast in 2007.

With this background, Riti was advised to undergo gene test to determine if she was carrying a mutation in

a gene associated with breast cancer. After consultation with Dr Geeta Kadayaprath, breast surgeon and Dr Amit Verma, Genetics consultants, she underwent genetic testing and as luck would have it, her results were positive for BRCA1 mutation. The results were affirmative that she had around 80% of developing breast cancer and 50-60% chances of developing ovarian cancer in her lifetime.

“Only 10% cases of breast cancer are due to genetic mutation. While it is rare, we are seeing quite a few patients with high risk familial cancers. The fear of what a mutation in the gene may portend drives many from actually undergoing the test. There is still a social stigma attached to cancer and there are many who don't want to know their mutation status. Timely action in those with the mutation is the best chance against cancer developing. It is very well known that the journey after developing cancer can be tough with uncertain outcomes. Fortunately, in this case, the elder sister took timely measures to get her younger sister checked for the mutation in BRAC1 gene. It is important for people to be aware and take all possible steps to prevent the disease from happening. Knowing is empowering. Nothing is more important than leading a full, healthy life.” said Dr. Geeta Kadayaprath, Director, Surgical Oncology, Max Super Speciality Hospital, Vaishali.

Epitomizing the essence of Nidarr Hamesha, Riti has embarked on a unique journey with the staunch support of her sister, mother and her husband, by demonstrating rare courage to undergo preventive surgery to reduce the risk of breast cancer by upto 95%. There is a rise in number of such cases with high risk of familial cancer due to possible gene mutation, putting one at a very high risk of developing cancer.

“When a mutation in the BRCA 1 gene comes positive, the chances of developing Breast Cancer are 80% and Ovarian and Fallopian Tube Cancer is 50-60%, in the lifetime (80 years) of the patient. Since the tests of Riti revealed an ovarian cyst, the reasons to get the surgery done became even more critical. By removal of just ovaries, risk of ovarian cancer decreases by 80 percent n breast by 56 percent n total reduction of risk of cancer by just BSO is 77 percent. And in her case because we did prophylactic bilateral mastectomy also, we reduced the risk of cancer to 95 percent.” Said Dr Kanika Gupta, Associate Director, Oncology, Max Super Speciality Hospital, Vaishali

“Three weeks ago, I suddenly developed pain in the lower abdomen and upon investigation, the results revealed a cyst in the ovary. Upon further insistence from my elder sister who had already undergone mastectomy surgery after being diagnosed with breast cancer, I had agreed to get my genes tested. Dr Geeta kept me with two options, either to 'wait and watch' with frequent imaging studies and clinical examinations until the progression of breast cancer, or to go ahead of the disease by voluntarily undergoing surgery to avoid any chances of breast cancer. With the assurance of the doctors, I preferred to undergo removal of my breasts, fallopian tubes, ovaries along with breast reconstruction surgery.” Said Ms Riti, Patient who underwent preventive breast cancer surgery.

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