

## PEOPLE IN ENGLAND WITH JEWISH ANCESTRY TO BE OFFERED BRCA TEST

Tens of thousands of people in England with Jewish ancestry, who have a higher risk of developing certain cancers, are to be offered a genetic test on the NHS.

People with Jewish ancestry are about six times more likely to carry faults in their BRCA genes than the general population. The new scheme forms part of a national drive by health leaders to identify more people with a higher risk of cancer, in an effort to spot and treat the disease earlier.

BRCA refers to two genes, BRCA1 and BRCA2, which repair DNA damage and normally help to protect against cancer. Some people are born with a fault in one of the genes, which increases their likelihood of developing certain cancers, including breast, ovarian, prostate and pancreatic cancer.

A fault in one of the BRCA genes affects about one in 400 people, but the NHS said people with Jewish ancestry were six times more likely to carry the faults.

NHS England is introducing a

national BRCA gene testing programme to pick up changes that push up cancer risk, with anyone over 18 with Jewish ancestry offered a simple saliva test. Saliva samples are done at home and then sent to a lab for testing.

Anyone with a Jewish grandparent can register for a saliva kit to be sent to them by visiting <http://jewishbrca.org>

The programme aims to identify thousands more people carrying faults in the BRCA genes over the next two years. These people would be able to have regular scans to check for tumour growth and access treatment more quickly if necessary.

NHS England expects to test about 30,000 people over the next two years.

