

BCFR NEWSLETTER

Keeping you up to date on the Breast Cancer Family Registry

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PUBLICATIONS & NEWS

Oral Contraceptive Use in BRCA1 and BRCA2 Mutation Carriers: Absolute Cancer Risks and Benefits

In the general population, use of certain contraceptives (combined-type oral contraceptive preparations, or COCP) can greatly reduce the risk of certain cancers (such as ovarian and endometrial cancers), but result in small increases in risk of other cancers (such as breast cancer). In order to help patients with BRCA1 and BRCA2 mutations make informed decisions regarding use of contraceptives, researchers determined that more information was needed on absolute cancer risk-benefit estimates. Do contraceptives increase or decrease cancer risk in BRCA1 and BRCA2 mutation carriers?

In a recent study using data from the Breast Cancer Family Registry, researchers made risk-benefit estimates for breast, ovarian, and endometrial cancers in BRCA1 and BRCA2 mutation carriers. Overall, the study found that contraceptive use in BRCA1 and BRCA2 carriers initially increases breast, ovarian, and endometrial cancer risk, but it strongly decreases lifetime cancer risk. For example, For 10,000 BRCA1 mutation carriers, 10 years of contraceptive use from age 20 to 30 years resulted in 66 additional COCP-associated cancer cases by the age of 35 years, in addition to 625 cases expected for never users. However, by the age of 70 years such contraceptive use resulted in 907 fewer cancer cases than the expected 9093 cases in never users.

Talk to your doctor or treatment team about this and other factors that can reduce your lifetime risk of developing cancer. [To read the full study, click here.](#)

COVID-19 Vaccine Information for Cancer Patients, Survivors, and Caregivers

As vaccines are now widely available to help protect against COVID-19, you may have questions as a cancer patient, survivor, or caregiver. Please visit the [American Cancer Society](#) for more information about the vaccine.

PARTICIPANT RESEARCH HUB

PARTICIPANT RESOURCES

[BCFR Youtube Channel](#)

Featuring interviews with BCFR researchers.

[Recordings of Past Events](#)

Watch webinars about breast cancer risk, risk management, and hereditary breast cancer hosted by the Columbia Cancer Center and Huntsman Cancer Institute.

[Newsletters](#)

Revisit past newsletters anytime!

[Publications](#)

Browse over 600 BCFR publications listed on our website.

Let us know what topics you are interested in learning more about!

Contact your BCFR research team or [submit a message through the BCFR website contact form.](#)



MEET A RESEARCHER

Debra Ma

Deb's role on the study is helping us secure, organize, and maintain the data. She has extensive experience managing data, performing data quality control, and writing data queries and reports. She started at Huntsman Cancer Institute in 1998 and has been involved in the Breast Cancer Family Registry project since 2009. Her experience includes managing data within HCI as well as preparing limited or de-identified datasets for outside collaborators. Data privacy and security are extremely important to her. "I like to remind myself that every piece of data I manage represents an important person with a unique story". Ms. Ma currently oversees our Population Sciences Data Team, a resource which helps many study teams doing research at Huntsman Cancer Institute.

HEALTHY TIPS

Choosing Sunscreen

As summer comes to a close at our BCFR sites in the United States, it's still as important as ever to protect your skin from the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays. UV rays can be just as strong or stronger in the winter too! Sunscreen is one important tool to stay sun safe all year long. However, not all sunscreens are created equal! It is important to read the labels and choose sunscreen that has the following:

- **SPF 30 or higher.** The SPF number is the level of protection the sunscreen provides against UVB rays, which are the main cause of sunburn. A higher SPF number means more UVB protection.
- **Broad spectrum.** Sunscreen products can only be labeled "broad spectrum" if they have been tested and shown to protect against both UVA and UVB rays. Only broad spectrum sunscreen products with an SPF of 15 or higher can state that they help protect against skin cancer and early skin aging if used as directed with other sun protection measures.
- **Water resistant.** Sunscreens can claim to be "water resistant," but they have to state whether they protect the skin for 40 or 80 minutes of swimming or sweating, based on testing.
- **Expiration dates.** Check the expiration date on the sunscreen to be sure it's still effective. Most sunscreen products are good for at least 2 to 3 years, but you may need to shake the bottle to remix the sunscreen ingredients. Sunscreens that have been exposed to heat for long periods, such as if they were kept in a glove box or car trunk through the summer, may be less effective.

For more information on sun safety, [see this article from the American Cancer Society](#). Stay safe!

CONTACT US

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