

Do all breast cancer patients need genetic testing?

The nation's breast surgeons are advising that all patients diagnosed with breast cancer be offered genetic testing to check for inherited mutations, fueling an intense debate about how such tests should be used to prevent and [treat disease](#).

The American Society of Breast Surgeons, which sent its recommendations [February 14] to its 3,400 members, said it developed the recommendation because current guidelines are too restrictive. "Too many patients develop cancers that might have been prevented or found earlier if genetic testing had been performed," said [breast cancer surgeon] Walton Taylor.

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More than 266,000 new cases of invasive breast cancer are diagnosed in the United States every year. Under the surgeons' recommendation, almost all those patients would be tested, as would family members whose relatives discover they have mutations, said Taylor. It's not clear how many people are being tested now, but experts said it is far fewer than what the recommendation contemplates. [About 40,000 patients die of breast cancer annually](#).

Genetic tests that once cost thousands of dollars are now much cheaper. Some cost hundreds of dollars, depending on how many genes they test.

Read full, original post: [Breast surgeons say all breast cancer patients should be offered genetic testing](#)