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Home test kits could help flag cancer risk

TORONTO STAR WIRE SERVICES

Researchers at Women's College Hospital in Toronto are hoping to increase screening for genetic mutations linked to a higher risk of certain types of cancers by making an at-home testing kit accessible to Canadian adults.

Participants who sign up for the Screen Project will be sent a DIY saliva-collection set that they can use and then ship to a U.S. facility. The samples will be tested for gene mutations BRCA1 and BRCA2, which are linked to a heightened risk of breast and ovarian cancer for women and prostate cancer for men.

Genetic screening has been in the spotlight since actor and activist Angelina Jolie publicly learned she was a carrier of BRCA1 and had her breasts and ovaries removed as a preventative measure.

Beyond making screening more accessible, this new Canada-wide project hopes to examine the benefits of widely testing for these mutations.

The kits cost about \$200 each and financial assistance is available.