

WELLNESS

# Model Bianca Balti Reflects on Her BRCA1 Diagnosis and Preventative Mastectomy

BY MARGAUX ANBOUBA

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Jacopo Raule/Getty Images



“It’s a strange situation,” model [Bianca Balti](#) tells me over zoom. A series of chance encounters in late 2022 led her to get her genes evaluated—one of those simple spit-in-a-tube tests—and she discovered she was a carrier for the BRCA1 gene.

The results gave her a crystal ball into the future. Balti now knew she had a 50 percent chance of getting breast cancer and 30 percent chance of ovarian cancer in her lifetime. “I wasn't sick, yet—but I knew the chances were much higher that I would be one day. And I now had the free will to do something about it.”

At the time, Balti was just a few years shy of 39, the age at which one of her paternal aunts had died from an extremely aggressive form of breast cancer. So with the support of her friends, family, and medical experts, the mother of two young girls chose to undergo a preventative double mastectomy on December 8, 2022. “I wanted to be a good role model for my daughters and take care of my health,” she says. Now, she's sharing the experience with *Vogue*.

“The hardest part of this entire process has been the fear,” she says. “Of finding out the diagnosis, the unknown, of taking time off work, of not knowing how my body will look.” The latter was something particularly in focus for the model, who professionally is one half of the iconic couple in the Dolce & Gabbana Light Blue advertisements.

“Obviously, how we look should be the last of our concerns. Life should be our concern, but many women do care. My relationship didn't change with my body throughout the process, which I think was actually a big win. I feel the same, comfortable. Except for that I have this knowledge, which is powerful.”

Balti plans to remove her ovaries at a later date, but for now, she's continuing to share her story in the hopes of encouraging more women learn about their BRCA status. From there, they can evaluate their options with a professional and choose the medical route that's best for them.

“Every time I speak publicly about what happened to me, people will reach out and tell me they did a mammogram or had their genes tested,” she says with pride. “So I know it actually makes a difference when you talk about it.”

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Topics Wellness

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