

Genetic Testing for Hereditary Cancers

You have been diagnosed with a type of cancer that makes you eligible for genetic testing. A diagnosis of cancer is common but hereditary cancer is not. Most cancers develop by chance. About 5 to 10% of cancers are hereditary. This handout offers you information on genetic testing for hereditary cancers.

We all have genes that protect us from developing cancer. If you are born with a change (called a mutation) in one of these genes, you have an increased risk of developing certain types of cancer. This is called hereditary cancer. Mutations can be passed down from your parents and passed on to your children.

Genetic testing for hereditary cancer is available to you because you have been diagnosed with cancer. Genetic testing is done using a sample of your blood. You can choose not to have genetic testing. It is up to you.

The benefits of having genetic testing

Your results may:

- Offer information helpful in the planning of your cancer treatment.
- Tell us you have an increased risk of developing other cancers.
- Guide decisions on what cancer screening you need.
- Tell us your family members have an increased risk of developing cancer.

Risks of genetic testing

- Having genetic testing may make you feel scared or worried.
- You and your family members may not agree on the benefits of genetic testing.
- Your genetic testing results may not provide clear answers.

The meaning of genetic testing results

- A positive test result means you have a mutation in a gene, causing you to have a higher risk of developing certain types of cancer. Your family members may also have the mutation and be at increased risk of developing cancer. Your family members can have genetic testing to find out if they have the mutation.
- A negative test result is the most common test result. It means no mutations were found. Your cancer likely happened by chance. We do not know everything about hereditary cancers so there is a small chance you have a hereditary cancer. We do not test your family members with this test result.
- A variant of unknown significance means the test found a change in a gene but it is not known if the change causes an increased risk of cancer. We do not test your family members with this test result.

Receiving your test results

The Genetics Clinic will receive your test results in about 6 to 8 weeks. We will call you to book an appointment to talk about your results.

More information

Watch the video found at the link or QR code below.

Hereditary Cancer Genetic Testing - Mainstreaming
[youtube.com/watch?v=NZjWyGrEqL4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NZjWyGrEqL4)



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