

Genetic Counseling Q & A

Q. What is genetic counseling for hereditary cancer?

A. Certain kinds of cancer run in families. Genetic counseling can help you learn more about the genetic causes of cancer and how they may affect you and your family.

Q. How can genetic counseling help me?

A. Reviewing your medical and family history with a genetic counselor can help you learn about your risk of inherited cancer and the risk your family members may face. If you are at a higher risk, genetic counseling can help you determine if genetic testing is right for you, and provide information about early screening tests. Genetic counselors can discuss with you the emotional aspects of knowing the results of your genetic testing and refer you to resources for cancer support.

Q. Who should consider genetic counseling?

A. If you have had several family members with similar types of cancer or have a family member who carries a known mutation in a cancer-causing gene, then you should strongly consider meeting with a genetic counselor. If you yourself have had cancer at a young age or have recently been diagnosed, a genetic counselor may be useful to help you make decisions about managing your cancer.

Contact your local care team to schedule an appointment today.



Genetic Counseling is available at all CCWW locations.

Amery Hospital & Clinic

Hudson Hospital & Clinic

Osceola Medical Center

St. Croix Regional Medical Center

SCRMC Frederic Clinic

Western Wisconsin Health

Westfields Hospital & Clinic



**Cancer Center of
Western Wisconsin**

Cancer Center of Western Wisconsin

Amery Hospital & Clinic • Hudson Hospital & Clinic • Osceola Medical Center • Radiation Therapy Center of Western Wisconsin

St. Croix Regional Medical Center • Frederic Clinic of SCRMC • Western Wisconsin Health • Westfields Hospital & Clinic



Q. What is a genetic counselor?

A. Genetic counselors are individuals with special training in medical genetics related to cancer and are certified through the American Board of Genetic Counseling. They work with doctors, social workers, nurses, and other medical professionals in helping patients determine if they are at risk of inherited cancer.

Q. What is genetic testing?

A. Genetic testing is often done through a blood test. Once the blood is drawn in a clinic, the sample is sent to a laboratory for testing to determine if there is genetic mutation.

Q. What happens at a genetic counseling visit?

A. The genetic counselor will gather detailed family and personal medical histories to determine if you are at risk of inherited cancer and if there is a need to consider genetic testing. The counselor will then interpret the results of the genetic testing that you may choose to have done, and provide support for both you and your family members affected by genetic conditions.

Q. Do I have to have genetic testing if I visit a counselor?

A. No. Genetic counseling and genetic testing are two very different things. A genetic counselor will review your medical history and help you determine if genetic testing is appropriate. Genetic testing analyzes your blood for genetic mutations.

Q. How do I prepare for my visit?

Gather family and medical information including:

- Types of cancer or noncancerous tumors or polyps in family members and ages they occurred
- Ages at which family members died and causes of death