Genetic counseling is the process of helping people understand and adapt to the medical, psychological and familial implications of genetic contributions to disease. This process integrates risk assessment, education, and counseling. In some cases, it includes the offer of genetic testing, decision-making support, and interpretation of results. Genetic counseling is best provided by specialists with knowledge and experience in clinical genetics, such as genetic counselors, physician geneticists, and advanced practice nurses trained in genetics. Qualified genetics professionals are board certified or state licensed.

Patient talking points

Reason for referral
- Discuss reason for referral. Some common reasons include: follow-up on family history information, discussion of risk and preventative/screening measures, assessment of appropriateness for genetic testing, or discussion of benefits and risks of genetic testing.
- Discuss possible benefits of the referral
- Discuss possible harms of not pursuing the referral
- Explain the expected outcome (diagnosis, information, testing, risk assessment, etc.)

Components of a cancer genetic counseling session
- Detailed medical and family history
- Risk assessment and risk counseling
- Addressing psychosocial issues and emotional concerns
- Directing an in-depth consent process for genetic testing, when applicable
- Disclosing results of genetic testing, when applicable
- Determining and communicating screening and management plans
- Summarizing and planning for follow up

Logistics of referral
- Provide names, roles and credentials of genetic professional(s) involved.
- Discuss cost, insurance coverage and payment options.
- Give directions and contact information
- Make a plan for how the patient will follow-up with you after the consult.

Finding a genetics professional

General resources
Genetic counselors, clinical geneticists, and nurse specialists in genetics may be available in your institution or you may need to contact someone elsewhere. You can find a genetics specialist through:
- National Society of Genetic Counselors Directory ([www.nsgc.org](http://www.nsgc.org))
- American Board of Medical Genetics Directory ([www.acmg.net](http://www.acmg.net))
- International Society of Nurses in Genetics ([www.isong.org](http://www.isong.org))

It can sometimes be challenging to find a genetics expert locally. There are some opportunities available for telecounseling through academic institutions and private businesses. In some cases, insurance companies will pay for these services.
Maine resources

Genetics Professionals

**The Cancer Genetics Program** at Maine Medical Center (Scarborough, ME)
The Cancer Risk and Prevention Clinic provides a family history evaluation and genetic risk assessment for individuals and families primarily in Southern Maine and New Hampshire.

- Services offered: comprehensive cancer risk assessment, evaluation, and genetic counseling
- Cancer indications and syndromes seen: all
- Staffing: board-certified genetic counselor, medical oncologist with expertise in cancer genetics
- Access to high risk services: refer and coordinate within hospital system as necessary
- Contact:
  - 100 Campus Drive, Suite 121
  - Scarborough, ME 04074
  - Phone: (207) 396-7877 for referrals and questions
  - Fax: (207) 396-8766

- Other: Staffs Waldo County General Hospital telegenetics clinic. See below for additional information.

**Eastern Maine Medical Center – Cancer Risk Counseling Clinic** (Bangor, ME)
The Cancer Risk Counseling Clinic provides assessment for individuals and families at risk for a variety of hereditary cancer syndromes.

- Services offered: comprehensive cancer risk assessment, evaluation, and genetic counseling
- Cancer indications and syndromes seen: all
- Staffing: board-certified medical geneticist
- Access to high risk services: refer and coordinate within and outside of hospital system as necessary
- Contact:
  - Lafayette Family Cancer Center
  - 33 Whiting Hill Road
  - Brewer, ME 04412
  - Phone: (207) 973-7476 for referrals and questions
  - Fax: (207) 973-5822

**Maine Center for Cancer Medicine** (Scarborough, Biddeford, Brunswick, and Sanford, ME)
Cancer genetic counseling and risk assessment available through the private medical group Maine Center for Cancer Medicine.

- Services offered: comprehensive cancer risk assessment, evaluation, and genetic counseling
- Cancer indications and syndromes seen: all
- Staffing: board-certified genetic counselor
- Access to high risk services: refer and coordinate within and outside of hospital system as necessary
- Contact:
  - 100 Campus Drive, Suite 108
  - Scarborough, ME
  - Phone: (207) 396-8017 (Brenda)
  - Fax: (207) 396-7610
  - 81 Medical Center Drive, Suite 1300G
  - Brunswick, ME 04011
  - Phone: (207) 729-1148 (Stephanie)
  - Fax: (207) 729-2789

  - 29 West Cole Road
  - Biddeford, ME 04005
  - Phone: (207) 282-0448 (DeeDee)
  - Fax: (207) 286-9126
  - 27 Industrial Avenue
  - Sanford, ME 04073
  - Phone: (207) 490-7777
  - Fax: (207) 490-7779

- Other: Genetic counseling services at the Scarborough location are available only to patients of the Maine Center for Cancer Medicine medical group. Genetic counseling services at the other locations are available to any patient.
Telegenetics at Waldo County General Hospital (Belfast, ME)
Waldo County General Hospital is piloting telegenetic services videoconferencing with Maine Medical Center’s cancer genetic specialists.

- Services offered: comprehensive cancer risk assessment, evaluation, and genetic counseling
- Cancer indications and syndromes seen: all
- Staffing: nurse facilitates evaluation in-person; videoconferencing with board-certified genetic counselor and medical oncologist with expertise in cancer genetics
- Access to high risk services: refer and coordinate within and outside of hospital system as necessary
- Contact:
  118 Northport Avenue
  Belfast, ME 04915
  Referrals and scheduling can occur within the Waldo County General Hospital system or by calling Maine Medical Center at (207) 396-7877
- Other: As of March 2014, offering one clinic per month.

Mass General Cancer Center Cancer Genetics Program at Central Maine Medical Center (Lewiston, ME)
The Mass General Cancer Center Cancer Genetics Clinic provides a family history evaluation and genetic risk assessment for individuals and families primarily in Central Maine.

- Services offered: comprehensive cancer risk assessment, evaluation, genetic counseling, and genetic testing
- Cancer indications and syndromes seen: all
- Staffing: Mass General Cancer Center board-certified genetic counselor and case review with Mass General Cancer Center Program physicians at Mass General in Boston
- Access to high risk services: refer and coordinate within hospital system and at Mass General Cancer Center as necessary
- Contact:
  12 High St.
  2nd Floor – Suite 205
  Lewiston, ME 04240
  Tel: 207 795 2935
  Fax: 207-795-2319

Maine Genetics Program
The Maine Genetics Program (MGP) is a statewide program that provides grants to agencies to assure the availability of comprehensive genetic services for the citizens of Maine. Services include risk assessment, laboratory and clinical diagnosis, counseling, case management and referral, and, education and training to providers and consumers.
Contact Ellie Mulcahy for more information.

Screening Programs
Information about Maine screening programs for breast, cervical and colon cancer can be found at www.screenmaine.org.

- Maine CDC Breast and Cervical Health Program (MBCHP)
  MBCHP provides breast and cervical cancer screening and diagnosis services to underserved women. The program pays for an office visit to screen for breast or cervical cancer and screening mammograms at participating locations. It also covers limited diagnostic or follow-up services for qualifying patients.
- Maine CDC Colorectal Cancer Control Program
  This program provides no-cost screening services for Mainers who do not have health insurance or who have health insurance that does not pay for colonoscopies and meet certain requirements.
Connecticut resources

Genetics Professionals

**Bennett Cancer Center** at Stamford Hospital (Stamford, CT)
30 Shelburne Road
Stamford, CT 06904
Phone: (203) 276-7693

**Danbury Hospital/New Milford Hospital** (Danbury, CT)
24 Hospital Avenue
Danbury, CT 06810
Phone: (203) 739-4957
Fax: (203) 739-1922

**Helen & Harry Gray Cancer Center** at Hartford Hospital (Hartford, CT)
80 Seymour Street
Hartford, CT 06102
Phone: (860) 545-6000

**Hereditary Cancer Program** at the University of Connecticut (West Hartford, CT)
65 Kane Street
West Hartford, CT 06119
Phone: (860) 523-6424

**The Katherine Ann King Rudolph Hereditary Cancer Genetics Program** at the Hospital of Central Connecticut (New Britain, CT)
100 Grand Street, E121
New Britain, CT 06050
Phone: (860) 224-5900 x6630

**Karvoski Genetics Program** at Saint Francis/Mount Sinai Regional Cancer Center (Hartford, CT)
114 Woodland Street
Hartford, CT 06105
Phone: (860) 714-6483

**Whittingham Cancer Center** at Norwalk Hospital (Norwalk, CT)
24 Stevens Street
Norwalk, CT 06856
Phone: (203) 852-2148

**Yale Cancer Genetic Counseling Program** at the Yale Cancer Center (New Haven, Greenwich, and Griffin, CT)
55 Church Street, Suite 402
New Haven, CT 06510
Outreach clinics: Greenwich, Griffin
Phone: (203) 764-8400
Fax: (203) 764-8401