

Genetic Counseling Program



 **ValleyHealth**
Cancer Care

Rev. 3/19

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Winchester Medical Center offers genetic counseling services to patients who may have a genetic explanation for their personal or family history of cancer. Genetic counselors are healthcare professionals specifically trained to interpret and discuss complex genetic information with patients and their families. Reasons for referral to a genetic counselor include cancer at a young age, cancer in multiple family members, or a particular pattern of cancers in a family.

How Will Genetic Counseling Help Me?

The purpose of the genetic counseling appointment is to help you better understand the possibility of a hereditary cancer syndrome in you and to help you make informed decisions about genetic testing.

The genetic counselor will help you by:

- Collecting a detailed cancer-focused medical and family history
- Assessing your cancer risks based on this information
- Discussing the genetics of cancer and possible hereditary cancer syndromes in you
- Reviewing your genetic testing options and how those results might impact your health care
- Providing psychosocial support and resources to patients
- Helping patients communicate genetic information to their families and physicians

Do I Have To Have Genetic Testing?

You do not, but genetic testing results could help your doctors make better decisions about cancer screenings and treatments. At your appointment the genetic counselor will answer any questions you might have

about genetic testing, including financial concerns, so you can make the best decision for yourself. If you choose to have genetic testing, the counselor will help coordinate your testing and will explain the results to you and your physician once the test results are back. If you decide not to have genetic testing, the counselor will give you as much information as possible, based on your medical history and family history.

Preparing for Your Visit

At your appointment the genetic counselor will ask questions about your medical history and family history information. The counselor will ask about medical information in extended family members (children, siblings, parents, aunts and uncles, and grandparents). If any relatives have had a cancer diagnosis, it would be helpful if you could gather some details, like the type of cancer and the age at diagnosis, before speaking with the genetic counselor. Gathering this information in advance will help the genetic counselor provide you with the most complete and accurate interpretation of your cancer risks..

Getting to Your Visit

Genetic counseling appointments are scheduled in the Outpatient Diagnostic Center, 300 Campus Boulevard, located north of Winchester Medical Center and across from the Valley Health Wellness & Fitness Center. Please plan to arrive 15-20 minutes prior to your appointment time with a copy of your insurance card.

To schedule your appointment, please contact the genetic counseling office at 540-536-1655.