

What if I cannot attend my appointment?

As only 3 or 4 families are seen in each clinic session, it is important that we don't waste any appointments. **Please let us know well in advance if you are unable to attend so that this appointment can be offered to another family.** You will then be given an appointment when one is next available. If you do not wish to continue with your referral at any stage, please let us know and we won't send you any further appointments.

What about screening?

Cancer screening aims to detect cancers early when the outlook following treatment is usually good. All types of cancer screening have drawbacks. It is important that extra screening is only offered when the benefits to an individual outweigh the risks.

Can I have a genetic test?

Genetic testing is only possible in a small number of families. In these families we usually require a blood sample from a relative with cancer before testing can be considered in other family members.

DNA banking

If a genetic test is not available for your family at the moment, we may offer to store a blood sample from a family member with cancer in case of future medical advances.

If a relative with cancer is terminally ill it is important for you to let us know as soon as possible. We may be able to arrange for a blood sample to be stored from your relative. In this way we can preserve the possibility of genetic testing in the future without causing undue distress to your relative.

Research studies

We may let you know if there are approved research studies around inherited cancer which you or your family could take part in. It is your decision whether you wish to take part in these studies and it will not affect your care if you choose not to.

What about other relatives?

Relatives who are concerned about their own risk of developing cancer should ask their GP to refer them to their local Cancer Genetics Service. We can only share the information on your family with your permission.

Where can I get further information?

Some information about cancer can be found on the following websites. You may wish to wait until after your appointment so that we can direct you to information most appropriate to you.

<http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/>

<http://www.macmillan.org.uk/Home.aspx>

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Are you interested in being a member of Birmingham Women's? For more information visit www.bwhct.nhs.uk and click on 'About the Trust' then 'Foundation'. Alternatively, call us: 0121 627 2695



Birmingham Women's



NHS Foundation Trust

The Cancer Genetics Service

Information for people who have been referred to the cancer genetics service



If you need more advice please contact:

West Midlands Family Cancer Service
Clinical Genetics Unit
Birmingham Women's NHS Foundation Trust
Mindelsohn Way
Edgbaston,
Birmingham
B15 2TG

Telephone: 0121 607 4757

Fax: 0121 623 6949

Email: wmfacs@bwhct.nhs.uk

We know there is a lot of information in this leaflet. You may find it helpful to keep it and refer back to the relevant sections later.

Why have I been referred?

You or some of your relatives may have had cancer. The Genetics Service can help answer some of the following questions:

- Are members of my family at an increased risk of developing cancer?
- Can we have extra cancer screening?
- Is there anything I can do to reduce my cancer risk?
- Can I have a genetic test?

What is the family history form for?

To answer these questions accurately, we need to make a full assessment of your family history. It is important for us to have as much information as possible to do this so we ask you to complete the family history form. If it is not possible to gather all this information, we can proceed with whatever information you can give us.

I've completed the form, what happens now?

We try and confirm details of your relatives' cancers, where possible. We need permission from relatives who are living to look at their medical records. Once we have received your family history form, we will send consent forms for the appropriate relatives.

We can send these to them directly or via you if you would prefer. Once we have the information we need, we will contact you again with advice. In the meantime, if you have any concerns about symptoms you should consult your GP.

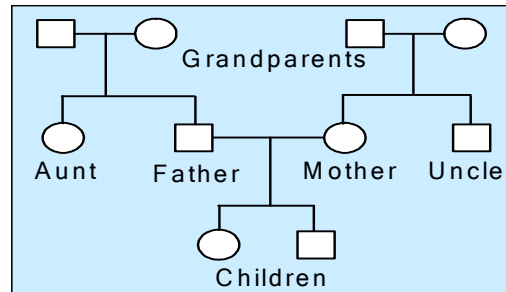
How long will all this take?

To an extent, this depends on you and your family. We really need to receive information as promptly as possible to advise you quickly and accurately. Once we have received your family history form, we aim to contact you with screening advice or to see you in clinic within 18 weeks. This is in line with government targets.

If the consent forms are delayed, we may not be able to obtain all the information we need in time. This may affect the accuracy of our advice. If there is a particular problem with this time frame please do let us know so we can postpone our advice. If the delay needs to be longer than 6 months, you may prefer to be re-referred at a more appropriate time.

How is my family history assessed?

From the form, we will draw your family tree.



Cancer is common, particularly in older people. Most of these cancers will have occurred by chance. From your family tree, we look at the types of cancer in your family and the ages of diagnosis.

Only a small number of families have a strong inherited tendency to cancer. This is more likely when we see:

- Several relatives with the same types of cancer, or cancers which are associated (e.g. breast and ovary or bowel and womb),
- Individuals with cancer at young ages,
- Individuals with more than one primary cancer.

Certain cancers (e.g. lung and cervical) have recognised environmental causes and tend not to be inherited.

Will I be offered an appointment?

Not everyone is routinely offered an appointment in the Genetics clinic. Sometimes we will write back to you and your doctors with information. You may also be referred on for extra cancer screening if this is appropriate. If you still have questions after receiving our letter we are happy to discuss your concerns over the telephone or to arrange an appointment for you if you wish.

What would the appointment involve?

You may be offered an appointment with one of our doctors or genetic counsellors. The appointment will usually be at one of your local hospitals. Consultations last around 45 minutes. You are welcome to bring members of your family or a friend to the clinic.

If you need an interpreter, please let us know in advance so we can make the appropriate arrangements. After the appointment we will write to you and your doctors summarising the discussion.