

## Frequently Asked Questions about Hereditary Cancer Risk assessment and genetic testing

### **Who should seek an appointment?**

- If you or a close family member were diagnosed with cancer at a young age
- If there are individuals in your family with the same type of cancer or with related cancers (for example breast and ovarian or colon and uterine on the same side of the family)
- If there are rare types of cancer within the family (for example male breast cancer)
- If you or a close family member has had more than one cancer (for example bilateral breast cancer or an individual who has had both colon and uterine cancers)
- If there is a known hereditary cancer syndrome in your family

### **What does the appointment involve?**

The appointment is a 30-60 minute meeting with a genetic counselor or nurse practitioner. We will review your medical and family history and discuss the chance that the cancer in your family is hereditary (passed down from generation to generation). If appropriate, genetic testing will be offered. We will discuss the risks, benefits and imitations of genetic testing as well as the possible results and implications of the results for you and family members.

### **What are the benefits of genetic testing?**

Genetic testing is a way to better assess your cancer risks. If we are able to identify a non-working gene, we know what cancers you are at increased risk for, and can recommend screening and prevention plans to lower/prevent the risks of those cancers or detect cancers at an early stage. If you have recently been diagnosed with cancer, the information could impact your decisions about parts of your treatment. If a non-working gene is identified, family members can also test to see if they have the predisposition or not.

### **Will this information lead to insurance discrimination?**

There is excellent federal and state legislation to protect against discrimination in health insurance and employment. You will discuss all of these issues during the appointment.

### **What does genetic testing involve?**

Genetic testing is usually a blood or saliva test. Before the blood test, you meet with us, so that you can decide if testing is right for you.

### **Will insurance cover these services?**

Each insurance plan is different. We recommend that you contact your insurance company ahead of time to see if genetic counseling is covered under your plan. If genetic testing is offered at the appointment, the lab will help to determine whether insurance covers the test before the test is started.

**Does making an appointment for risk assessment mean I have agreed to test?**

No. The appointment is an information session. At that meeting, we will discuss if testing is right for you. Then, you can decide whether to proceed. You can have genetic testing at that visit or at a later date.