

Neurological conditions

There are a number of neurological conditions which have a genetic basis. These include Huntington disease, myotonic dystrophy, Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease, Friedreich ataxia, muscular dystrophies and others.

These conditions tend to appear at varying times of life and get progressively worse, although there are exceptions.

All these conditions have a different genetic basis. If you or anybody in your family has one of these conditions, you should discuss seeing a genetic service with your doctor.

Most other neurological conditions – Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, stroke, motorneurone disease and others – are usually not based on a simple genetic alteration. But occasionally, genetics plays a part. You should talk to your doctor about the possibility of there being a genetic basis to these common conditions if:

- The condition comes on much younger than usual, or
- Two or more members of the family have the same condition.

In such cases, you would want to help your doctor understand your family history (see fact sheet on '*Your family history*') and you may be referred to a genetics service for specialised advice.

Contacts and further information

- All states and the ACT have familial cancer services. Contact them through your local state or territory health department.
- Australasian Genetic Alliance at <http://www.australasiangeneticalliance.org.au>
- National Organization for Rare Disorders at <http://www.rarediseases.org>
- Better Health Channel at <http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au>
- MyDr at <http://www.mydr.com.au>
- The Centre for Genetics Education at <http://www.genetics.edu.au>
- HealthInsite at <http://www.healthinsite.com>
- MedicineNet at <http://www.medicinenet.com>
- For other related fact sheets, you can contact the Gene Technology Information Service on **free call Australia-wide 1800 631 276** or email gtis-australia@unimelb.edu.au or visit Biotechnology Australia's website at <http://www.biotechnology.gov.au>