

Genetics services

A genetics service is a team of health professionals – including: counsellors, doctors, nurses, social workers and those who care for people who may have genetic conditions.

The people in a genetic service are able to:

- Discuss the possibility that you or someone in your family may have a genetic condition
- Offer counselling about the availability, appropriateness, benefits and risks of having genetic testing
- Carry out any tests that you agree to
- Talk about what the tests might mean for you, your family, your working life and so on
- Provide support and information after you have received the genetic test result and talk to you about what it now means for you and your family
- Provide on-going support to people with a genetic condition
- Refer you to a support group.

Genetic services are generally fairly small and fairly busy. You will need a referral from your doctor before attending.

If you are going to see a genetic service, you can prepare by:

- Learning as much as possible about your family's health (see fact sheet on '*How do genetic conditions occur?*')
- Taking along photos of as many family members as possible
- Taking along a list of questions you may have
- Taking along another family member, if possible.

There are a lot of other services which help people with genetic conditions. They include:

- Prenatal services
- Familial cancer services
- Specialist services for people with specific genetic conditions.

Contacts and further information

- Your local genetic service, which you can contact through your nearest community health centre, public hospital or health department.
- Australasian Genetic Alliance at <http://www.australasiangeneticalliance.org.au>
- The Centre for Genetics Education at <http://www.genetics.edu.au>
- 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>