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## Genetic Counseling

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Cancer In The Family

ARE YOU AT RISK?

Information, Support, & Testing for Families with Cancer History

Orange County Cancer Education and Research Foundation

Nearly everyone has had at least one family member with cancer. Although most cancers are not hereditary, in some families a predisposition to be passed from one generation to the next. When several family members are affected, suspicions arise about inheritance of cancer risk, especially when cancer occurs at a young age. The Cancer Genetics Program can provide answers to your questions about familial cancer.

### Does my family history affect my risk for cancer?

Our genetic counselor does an in-depth review of your personal and family history of cancer. We draw a family tree to identify patterns suggesting the presence of inherited cancer susceptibility in your family. Does this pattern of cancers fit with a known hereditary cancer syndrome? Or are the cancers in your family more likely to be due to non-inherited causes?

**What is my risk to develop the types of cancer in my family or types?**

We do an assessment of your personal risk of developing cancer. We discuss our findings with you to help you understand your risk. Genetic testing may be available in some cases. We identify and discuss testing options you may have. Deciding whether or not to have genetic testing is your choice, which can be made during counseling or in the future.

**How can this information improve my care, change my lifestyle or affect me emotionally?**

We provide personalized counseling to help your decision making about cancer risk. This counseling includes discussion of issues related to the risk of developing cancer, the impact of genetic test results on cancer screening and prevention strategies, the emotional effect of genetic information on other family members, and concerns about genetic privacy and insurance issues.

**What can I do about increased cancer risk?**

Based on the family history assessment and/or genetic test results, you and your physician develop the best approach to manage cancer risk. This approach includes prevention strategies to avoid developing high-risk cancers and screening strategies for early detection. We provide educational materials and resources to answer all your questions.

**Can these services help me if I've already had cancer?**

Inherited forms of cancer may present increased risks for new occurrence of original cancer or development of a related cancer. Understanding the features and other features of the specific type of inherited cancer can aid you and your physician, in the treatment of your existing cancer and in the detection and prevention of future cancers. Understanding whether your cancer type is inherited can also aid unaffected family members in the ways discussed.

**Who else may benefit from these services to detect inherited cancer risk?**

Even if there are few or no family members who have had cancer, the features may indicate a risk for an inherited type of cancer:

- You or a family member had cancer at an age much earlier than the cancer typically occurs (for example, breast cancer occurring before menopause or colorectal cancer or endometrial cancer occurring before age 45-50).
- You or a family member had more than one cancer (primary cancer and metastatic or cancer that has "spread"): both breasts, colon and rectum, etc.
- A rare cancer has occurred in the family, e.g., ovarian cancer, leukemia, cancer, sarcomas (bone, muscle or connective tissue tumors), or cancer in a man.

- A cancer susceptibility gene has already been detected in the family (e.g., *BRCA1*, *BRCA2*, *p53*, genes for HNPCC, etc.)

The cost of all counseling and consultation is covered by the Orange Cancer Education & Research Foundation. Neither you nor your insurance will be billed for these services. All genetic testing is done by outside labs. Therefore we will bill you or your insurance for any testing you choose to pursue.

As part of the consultation, we will assist you in all concerns of insurance coverage, authorization, and billing for testing, in coordination with your doctor's office and the testing lab. When applicable, we will help you explore low- or no-cost testing options, as available.

### APPOINTMENTS

Call to schedule an appointment for a family cancer risk assessment. We begin the process by sending you the information and forms to gather necessary family history information. With this family history, we can determine how best to proceed with setting appointments to provide the assessment, counseling and possible testing to address your concerns about inherited risk.

Genetic concerns usually affect multiple family members. If you wish, we encourage you to include other family members (such as a spouse, siblings, other, siblings, parents or adult children) in the counseling session.

If you are unsure who you may or may not feel comfortable with at the appointment, feel free to ask the counselor what will be covered, when scheduling an appointment.

All or any part of counseling/testing process can be done with several family members or as private, individual sessions, as best fits your needs.

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