

# Cheatsheet for our Patients

## What I should ask my physician

- › Can the symptoms that I suffer from have a genetic cause?  
Am I at risk for a genetic disease?

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### **Why does this matter?**

*Some factors can make you more prone to genetic diseases. It is important to know if you belong to one of the "at risk" categories.*

- › I don't have a family history of this disease. Do I still require genetic testing?

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*It is important to understand why your doctor thinks testing is necessary or not necessary with respect to your symptoms. If you are not sure, do not hesitate to question.*

- › Why is it important to consult my family before I decide to get a genetic test?

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*Mutations are hereditary. Your results may have implications for those related to you as well, so it may be a good idea to discuss with your family members prior to having a genetic test.*

- › What can the results of a genetic test tell me?

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*Genetic tests have many uses and different individuals have different reasons for requesting a genetic test. Make sure to discuss with your physician your reasons and also do not hesitate to ask which ones apply to you the most.*

- › What type of genetic test do I need?

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*There are several types of genetic tests. Some involve looking for mutations in specific genes, others involve searching the whole genome. It is important to discuss with your physician which is the most appropriate test for you.*

› How can a genetic counselor help me? Will s/he explain the consequences in detail and guide me also through personal/emotional questions?

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**Why does this matter?**

*Genetic counseling is strongly recommended before deciding if you want to be tested. Genetic test results are complex. The results of a test, whatever they may be, may take a toll on you and your family members emotionally. Make sure you are aware of the risks by discussing these in detail with a genetic counselor.*

› I or my family member was found to have a mutation by genetic testing. Does that mean I have/will get the associated disease?

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*As genetic test results are complex and there can be uncertainties to these results, it is important to discuss what having a mutation means to you and your family and make sure you understand them.*

› I have a mutation. Are there any lifestyle changes that can lower my chances of getting the disease?

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*There may be ways of lowering your risk for a disease you are predisposed to.*

› I have a mutation. Does that mean my children have/will have it, too?

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*Mutations can be inherited but not all follow the same pattern of inheritance.*

› I don't have a mutation. Does that mean I'm safe?

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*There are uncertainties to genetic testing. Make sure you understand them.*

› What are my options if I find out I have a mutation?

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*Make sure you are aware of the actions that you can take if you find out you have a mutation.*

› How will the sample for testing be collected?

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**Why does this matter?**

*DNA is present in almost all cells in your body, therefore, samples can be collected in a variety of ways.*

› Will my sample and results be secure and kept private?

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*The data you receive from the genetic test could be sensitive. Make sure enough care is taken to keep them private.*

› How long will it take to get the results?

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*A shorter wait means lesser anticipation and stress. It could be useful to know how long you'll need to wait and why.*

› How accurate are the results of a genetic test going to be?

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*There are a number of uncertainties to genetic testing despite top-notch technical advancements. Make sure you understand what these are.*

› How much does genetic testing cost? Does insurance pay for it?

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*You can only take a decision about testing once you are sure if there is an affordable test option available which is right for you.*

**› Contact Details**

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