



Cancer and Genetics

Heredity can play an important role in the development of certain cancers. Medical research has increased understanding of the link between genetics and cancer. We now know that certain types of cancer are more likely to run in families, such as melanoma, breast, ovarian, uterine, colon, pancreatic, stomach and some endocrine tumors.

Alterations, or mutations, in certain genes may increase a person's risk of developing cancer over their lifetime. Genetics alone do not determine a person's risk; many other factors influence the development of cancer, including diet, exercise, and exposure to environmental factors, such as cigarette smoke and tanning beds.

While genetic testing is a powerful tool in preventing cancer, it is not the only tool. Some people with a genetic risk may never develop cancer, while others without a genetic risk do. It is important to reduce your cancer risk in all areas of your life.

For more information, please call the Genetics and Assessment Clinic at (319) 558-4876.

Locations

We provide genetics and risk assessment services at these facilities:

Cedar Rapids

Helen G. Nassif Community Cancer Center
202 10th St. SE, Suite. 285
Cedar Rapids, IA 52403

Dubuque

UnityPoint Health® - Finley -
Wendt Regional Cancer Center
350 N Grandview Ave. | Dubuque, IA 52001

Fort Dodge

UnityPoint Health - Trinity Cancer Center
802 Kenyon Rd. | Fort Dodge, IA 50501

Waterloo

UnityPoint Health - Allen Hospital -
Community Cancer Center
3530 W 4th St. | Waterloo, IA 50701



Genetics and Risk Assessment Clinic
(319) 558-4876

unitypoint.org

Genetics and Risk Assessment Clinic



About Our Program

The number of diseases found to have a hereditary genetic cause is on the rise. The Genetics and Risk Assessment Clinic provides services to individuals identified as having an increased risk of a variety of genetic disorders. Those disorders include: Hereditary Cancer Syndromes, Cardio Genetics, including genetic forms of high blood pressure, high cholesterol, thrombophilia, arrhythmias, and cardiomyopathies, and Neuro Genetics and Inherited Connective Tissue Disorders such as Ehlers-Danlos syndrome, familial aneurysms, Marfan syndrome, and Loeys-Dietz syndrome.

OUR GENETIC PROFESSIONALS

specialize in oncology genetics and cancer risk counseling. Their expertise meets the high standards of the American College of Surgeons. Our comprehensive program includes:

- risk assessment
- genetic counseling
- testing
- referrals
- follow-up surveillance
- recommendations



A Genetics Risk Assessment Process Has Four Components

- **Initial assessment** – before your appointment, gather as much information as you can about your family’s medical history. You’ll meet with a genetic professional to complete a thorough family history. Based on this history, you receive education about reducing your disease risk factors and information regarding hereditary syndromes along with genetic testing. The benefits and risks of genetic testing, possible test results, and how those results may affect you and your family are discussed at length.
- **Genetic test** – genetic testing is not appropriate for everyone. If you choose to have testing done, a DNA sample is obtained and sent to a specialized lab.
- **Post-test education** – results of genetic testing are reviewed with you in detail. Our genetic professionals will discuss the test results and help you understand what this means for you and your family.
- **Ongoing support** – your genetic risk assessment journey doesn’t end with an initial assessment or genetic test results. Whatever your genetic risk may be, we provide referrals for everything from lifestyle changes to appropriate medical providers. Our goal is to do everything we can to reduce your risk and that of your loved ones.



The Family Connection

If you are concerned about your personal or family history, a risk assessment may be helpful. Family history of a disease does not always mean your risk is high, but genetic testing may be able to help you understand your individual risk factors. Unlike most other medical tests, hereditary genetic tests can reveal information not only about the person being tested but also about that person’s relatives. The presence of a harmful genetic mutation in one family member makes it more likely that other blood relatives may also carry the same mutation. Our genetic professionals will help you understand how your test results may affect other family members and how to talk to your family about your test results.

Confidentiality

The Genetics and Risk Assessment Clinic places the highest priority on maintaining our patients’ confidentiality. No one except your medical provider has access to your records without your consent.

If you choose to have genetic testing, most health insurance companies cover part or all of the testing costs. Insurance coverage is always verified before proceeding with genetic testing.