Waterloo Wellington
Regional Cancer Program
Ontario Health (Cancer Care Ontario)

WRHN
Waterloo Regional
Health Network

Your oncology team has referred you to the Cancer Genetics clinic for assessment regarding your personal and/or family history of cancer.

Please read the following instructions carefully.

Prior to accepting the referral, we require more information regarding your family history. Please complete the enclosed family history questionnaire to the best of your ability as soon as possible.

The Cancer Genetics clinic team will review the completed questionnaire to determine if you are eligible for assessment.

If you are eligible for assessment, we will notify you by phone of an appointment date and time to speak with a genetic counsellor. We book appointments based on the order the questionnaire is received. Please be aware that due to our wait list, we may schedule your appointment ≥ 12 months after we receive the questionnaire.

If you are not eligible for assessment, we will notify your referring provider.

If we do not receive the completed questionnaire within 3 months, we will close your file. We will notify your primary care provider.

Please return the questionnaire as soon as possible to:

Cancer Genetics Clinic
Waterloo Regional Health Network Cancer Centre @ Midtown
835 King Street West
Kitchener, ON N2G 1G3
Fax: (519) 749-2025

If you have any questions regarding the family history questionnaire or do not wish to proceed with the referral, please contact Cancer Genetics at **(519) 749-4370 x2832 or cancer.genetics@wrhn.ca.**

Waterloo Wellington Regional Cancer Program
Ontario Health (Cancer Care Ontario)

WRHN
Waterloo Regional Health Network

Genetic Counselling Fact Sheet for Hereditary Cancer

What does hereditary mean?

Hereditary (inherited) cancer means a gene error is passed from one generation to another, which increases the risk of cancer.

Are all cancers hereditary?

No, most cancers are not hereditary.
Most cancers occur for a variety of reasons, including:
- Age (our risk of developing cancer increases as we age)
- Lifestyle (smoking, alcohol consumption, high fat diet, overweight, or sun exposure)
- Environment (exposure to harmful substances, many of which are unknown to us)
- Chance (many cancers happen for unknown reasons or chance)
- Genes (some genes may play a very weak role in who develops cancer)
- Certain health conditions can make us more prone to certain types of cancer

Only a small number of cancers are actually hereditary, meaning they are due to a single gene, inherited from a parent. These genes can play a strong role in who develops or does not develop certain types of cancer.

Who should receive genetic counselling?

Some factors that may suggest hereditary cancer include:
- Multiple family members from the same side of the family with the same or related cancer (e.g. breast/ovarian/prostate or colon/uterine)
- Cancer at a young age (≤ 50 years)
- People with cancer more than once (>1 primary cancer)

What is genetic counselling for hereditary cancer?

At your appointment, a genetic counsellor will review your personal medical history and your family's medical history to assess your risk of cancer and/or hereditary cancer.

The genetic counsellor will discuss cancer screening recommendations (to detect cancers earlier when they are more treatable) and prevention options (ways to reduce your chance of developing cancer).

The genetic counsellor may offer genetic testing to some individuals/families to determine if there is a genetic cause for cancer. **Genetic testing, which is usually completed by collecting and analyzing a blood sample, is not offered to everyone who receives genetic counselling.**