

# What to Expect at Your Genetics Appointment

<http://genetics.kp.org>

## Why was I referred to Genetics?

There are many reasons why your doctor may have referred you to Genetics. Here are some of the most common reasons:

- Your doctor noticed physical features that may have a genetic basis.
- You or someone in your family has a medical or health problem that may have a genetic basis.
- Results from a medical test suggest a genetic condition.
- There is a family history of a genetic condition.
- You are pregnant and may be considering prenatal testing.

## What happens before my Genetics appointment?

Usually, nothing needs to happen before your appointment. However, sometimes medical information or a medical test is needed before you are seen. Depending on the reason you were referred, a genetic counselor may call to ask about your family history or you may be asked to have a medical test before your appointment. You are also welcome to contact the genetic counselor if you would like to discuss the referral or have any questions before your appointment.

## How do I prepare for a Genetics appointment?

There are a few things you can do to help prepare for this visit:

- Make a list of questions so that all of your concerns can be addressed.
- Gather information about your family's medical history.
- Consider bringing a friend or family member for support and to help remember the information discussed (optional).
- If requested, bring copies of any non-Kaiser medical records related to your condition or the condition in the family.

## Who will I see at my Genetics appointment?

At your appointment you may see a medical geneticist or a genetic counselor or both. Medical geneticists and genetic counselors often work together as a team.

- A medical geneticist is a doctor who specializes in diagnosing and treating conditions with a genetic cause.
- A genetic counselor is a medical professional who provides information, counseling, and support to individuals and families with genetic conditions.



## What can I expect at a Genetics appointment?

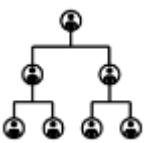
Your Genetics appointment may be different from a typical medical visit in a number of ways.



**Genetic appointments can sometimes last for an hour or longer.** Most of the visit is spent talking with the geneticist and/or the genetic counselor. The discussion may include information about specific genetic conditions and supportive counseling, when needed.



**A detailed medical history will be taken.** Your medical records are carefully reviewed and you may be asked to verify important details. If you are pregnant or are planning a pregnancy, information about your pregnancy history may be included (including miscarriages and infertility).



**Your family history will be reviewed.** The genetic counselor will draw a family tree (called a "pedigree") showing all relatives in several generations. You will be asked about any genetic conditions or medical problems in each person. You may also be asked about birth defects and intellectual disability. Your ethnic background will be recorded, since some genetic conditions are more common in certain ethnic groups



**A physical exam may be done.** Not all genetic visits require a physical exam. However, some visits include a physical exam to look for clues that could help in making a diagnosis. This may mean measuring many different parts of the body and taking notes on physical findings.



**Tests and additional referrals are sometimes recommended.** The geneticist may recommend tests or evaluations to help identify a diagnosis. Examples of these are blood tests, urine tests, x-rays, and eye exams.

## What can I expect after my appointment?

The geneticist or genetic counselor will write a report after your visit. This report is in your electronic medical record, and is available to the doctor who referred you. You may request a copy of this report as well. If a follow-up test or evaluation was ordered, you will be told when to expect results and how the results will be provided to you. The geneticist or genetic counselor will let you know if or when another Genetics appointment is needed.

If you have any unanswered questions or concerns after your visit, please contact us by phone or secure email. We also encourage you to call us if there are any major changes in your medical or family history. It is important to know that not every condition can be identified or diagnosed at the initial genetics visit. However, new conditions and tests are identified over time, so staying in touch with your genetic provider could be helpful for the future.

**For more information about Genetics, visit the Northern California Genetics Website at**

<http://genetics.kp.org>

You may contact your local Genetics Department at:

Fresno:	(559) 324-5330
Oakland:	(510) 752-6298
Sacramento:	(916) 614-4075
San Francisco:	(415) 833-2998
San Jose:	(408) 972-3300