

# What to Expect at Your Child's Genetics Appointment

<http://genetics.kp.org>

## Why was my child referred to Genetics?

There are many reasons a child may be referred to Genetics. Here are some of the most common reasons:

- Your child's doctor noticed physical or developmental features that may have a genetic basis.
- Your child has a medical or health problem that may have a genetic basis.
- There is a family history of a genetic condition.
- Results from a medical test suggest a genetic condition.

## What happens before my child's Genetics appointment?

Usually, nothing needs to happen before your child's appointment. However, sometimes medical information or a medical test is needed before your child is seen. Depending on the reason for the referral, a genetic counselor may call to ask about the family history or your child may be asked to have a medical test before the 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 my child's 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 the family history from both sides of the family.
- Review your child's developmental milestones (first sat, first walked, etc.)
- Pack toys or snacks, especially for small children.
- If requested, bring non-Kaiser medical records, school evaluations, and photographs of close family members.
- It is helpful if both parents are present, but is not required. Your other children are welcome at the visit if you feel they would not be too distracting.

## Who will we see at the Genetics appointment?

At your child's appointment you will most likely see a medical geneticist and a genetic counselor. 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?

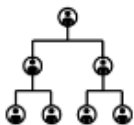
Your child's Genetics appointment may be different from a typical pediatric visit in a number of ways.



**Genetic appointments can sometimes last for an hour or longer.** Much 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. It may help to have something to keep your child occupied.



**A detailed medical history will be taken.** Your child's medical records are carefully reviewed and the doctor may verify important details with you. You may be asked about the pregnancy and delivery history, your child's early development, and any learning or behavior issues.



**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 child's 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. Occasionally other family members, such as siblings or parents, are briefly examined as part of the appointment.



**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. These follow-up tests are arranged after the Genetics exam. There are no blood samples taken during the visit.



**Photographs may be taken.** Sometimes the doctor will ask to take a photograph of your child to include in the medical record. These photos are used to help with the evaluation and to compare appearance at future appointments. Family photos may also be requested. You may decline having photographs taken.

## What can I expect after my child's appointment?

The geneticist will write a report following the visit. This report is in the electronic medical record and is available to the doctor who referred your child. 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 child's visit, please contact us by phone or secure email. 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 child's 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