

What is a genetic counselor?

Genetic counselors are healthcare professionals specially trained in medical genetics and counseling. They work in a variety of care settings and may have areas of focus, such as prenatal, pediatric, and cancer counseling.

What is genetic counseling?

Genetic counseling is the process of helping people understand and adapt to the medical, psychological, and familial implications of genetic contributions to disease (National Society of Genetic Counselors, 2005). This process involves:

- Addressing a patient's questions and concerns
- Obtaining detailed family and medical histories
- Assessing risk of genetic conditions, such as risk of a hereditary cancer
- Educating about relevant inheritance, testing, management, prevention, and research
- Counseling to promote informed choices about testing
- Facilitating genetic testing, if desired by the patient
- Interpreting test results and their implications for medical management and risk reduction
- Providing additional emotional and educational support as needed

While genetic testing is often discussed, a patient is **never** committing to testing by attending genetic counseling.

Who should have genetic counseling?

People whose personal and/or family histories are suggestive of a hereditary cancer syndrome or people who are especially concerned about such risk should consider genetic counseling.

What do I need to do prepare for my appointment?

- ✓ If possible, bring medical records, including any genetic testing results and tumor pathology reports, for yourself and/or affected relative(s).
- ✓ Learn the tumor location, subtype, age of onset, and treatment for affected relatives.
- ✓ Complete questionnaire and either scan and e-mail directly to Vanessa_Marcell@bshsi.org or fax to 845-533-7200 one week prior to the appointment or bring it with you to the appointment.
- ✓ Inform us if you may need an interpreter.
- ✓ Since a lot of information is reviewed during these appointments, please feel free to attend the appointment with a trusted relative or friend.
- ✓ If you decide to have genetic testing, during the initial consultation, a follow-up appointment will be scheduled to discuss results in person.

If you have any questions, please contact:

**Vanessa Marcell, Certified Genetic Counselor, at 845-533-4951 or 845-357-7462.
257 Lafayette Ave., Suite 200, Suffern, NY 10901**