



## Frequently Asked Questions

[www.swmedicalcenter.org/cancergenetics](http://www.swmedicalcenter.org/cancergenetics)

### What is a gene?

Genes are molecules that carry chemical messages of heredity. They are in every cell. Each cell has at least 30,000 genes! Half of your genes come from your father and half from your mother. These determine everything from hair and eye color to whether you will develop certain diseases.

### How do I know if I should be tested?

You must meet certain criteria to determine if you are a candidate for Cancer Risk Assessment Genetic Testing.

### What if the result is positive?

Testing may provide an explanation for the underlying cause of cancer in yourself or family members. Your doctor will work with you to develop a plan of care to lower your risk and hopefully prevent that type of cancer. This may involve healthier lifestyle and food choices, more frequent screenings, certain medications, and in some cases, surgery to decrease the risk of cancer.

### What if I am negative?

There still may be recommendations for screening and prevention measures based on your family's history.

### Will my insurance pay for the test?

Most health insurance plans provide coverage for BRAC analysis (breast and ovarian cancer) and for the Colaris analysis test for HNPCC (hereditary non-polyposis colorectal cancer and/or endometrial cancer). Contact your insurance specialist for details.

## The Southwest Difference

The diagnosis of cancer can be overwhelming. You and your loved ones may be facing many questions, medical treatment options and lifestyle changes.

At Southwest's Regional Cancer Center, we believe that superb cancer care goes beyond the latest technology and innovative treatments. We are here to help you and your loved ones keep the best quality of your life throughout your journey with cancer.

### Cancer Support Group

360.514.2174

[www.swmedicalcenter.org/cancersupport](http://www.swmedicalcenter.org/cancersupport)



**SOUTHWEST**  
Regional Cancer Center

*Cancer care for the whole person*

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## Cancer Genetics Program



**SOUTHWEST**  
Regional Cancer Center

*Cancer care for the whole person*



## Manage Your Family's Cancer Risk



If you have a personal or family history of cancer, the Cancer Genetics Program at Southwest Washington Medical Center may benefit you.

Through genetic counseling and testing, we are able to determine your susceptibility to particular types of cancer and provide options to reduce your cancer risk.

- Do you have a personal or family history of certain types of cancer?
- Are you at risk for cancer?
- What options help reduce the risk of cancer for you and your loved ones?

## Personal Testing/Family Risk

The Cancer Genetics Program evaluates five specific types of cancer:

- Breast
- Colorectal
- Melanoma
- Ovarian
- Uterine

## What Is Genetic Testing?

Genetic testing for cancer is a process to determine if you have inherited a specific gene that can significantly raise your risk of developing a certain type of cancer. If someone has inherited this gene, their risk factor goes up significantly, and their children have a 50% chance of inheriting the gene defect themselves.

At Southwest Washington Medical Center, we can do tests to find the genes that cause these types of cancer. Usually this is a simple blood test.

## Starting The Process

Whether you call us on your own or are referred by your physician, we'll begin the screening process immediately. Over the phone, you will talk with our Cancer Center nurse. She will take a brief family history and explain our services. If further screening is needed, we'll schedule an appointment.

At your appointment, a Cancer Center physician will conduct an in-depth family history and discuss your individual risk level. Specific guidelines for ongoing prevention, education, screenings, and followup exams will also be provided.

Should you or a member of your family meet the criteria for further genetic counseling, this option will be fully explained.

## Cancer Genetics Program Team



*Michaelann Liss, DO  
Medical Oncologist/Hematology  
Regional Cancer Center  
Genetic Specialist*

Our team supports you through the genetic testing process. Our highly skilled medical professionals include physicians, oncology certified nurses, Masters-level social workers and other staff.

Southwest's Regional Cancer Center is dedicated to addressing cancer at every level — not only through diagnosis, treatment, and

physical and emotional recovery, but also through prevention, education and research.

As an accredited regional cancer center, we are committed to providing comprehensive, convenient and coordinated care for our entire community.

## Is Your Family At Risk?

To see if you may be at increased risk for breast, colon, melanoma, ovarian, or uterine cancer, check every box that applies to you.

1. Have you been diagnosed with breast, colon, melanoma, ovarian, or uterine cancer before age 50?
 

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Have you been diagnosed with breast, colon, melanoma, ovarian, or uterine cancer at any age?
 

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Do you have relatives who have been diagnosed with breast, colon, melanoma, ovarian, or uterine cancer before age 50?
 

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Do you have relatives who have been diagnosed with breast, colon, melanoma, ovarian, or uterine cancer at any age?
 

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Are there any males in your family who have been diagnosed with breast cancer at any age?
 

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you answered YES to any of these questions, please call the Cancer Genetics Program at Southwest Washington Medical Center.

**360.514.2583**

[www.swmedicalcenter.org/cancergenetics](http://www.swmedicalcenter.org/cancergenetics)