



Advanced. Empowering. Personal.

Genetic Services



SSM Cancer Care

St. Mary's Health Center
St. Joseph Medical Park

What is SSM Cancer Care Genetic Services?

This service offers genetic counseling to those who are concerned about a hereditary cause for their personal and/or family history of cancer. The program's genetic counselors work with you to assess the likelihood that the cancer in your family is inherited and whether genetic testing is appropriate.

Why should I consider cancer genetic counseling?

Because cancer is so common, a family history of cancer does not automatically mean that you have an increased risk for developing cancer. Determining whether there is hereditary cancer in your family requires an individualized cancer risk assessment which can provide you with information so that you and your doctors can make informed decisions about cancer screening and prevention options.

Genetic counseling sessions and cancer risk assessment can be helpful for many people. The following information may help you decide if this service would be useful for you.



What are key signs of hereditary cancer?

If any of the following apply to you or your relatives, you may be at risk for hereditary cancer and could benefit from genetic counseling.

- One or more individuals diagnosed with cancer before the age of 50
- More than one person in the family has had the same type of cancer
- Cancer occurs in several close relatives and in more than one generation
- There are rare types of cancer, such as male breast cancer in your family
- A family member has had two or more different types of cancer
- A relative is known to have an inherited gene alteration that causes cancer
- One of the above risk factors and Jewish ancestry

What can I expect when meeting with a genetic counselor?

You will meet with a board certified genetic counselor who will review your personal medical history and your family history of cancer to provide you with an individualized cancer risk assessment. You can expect the following topics to be discussed:

- How likely it is that the pattern of cancer in the family is hereditary
- The chance that the cancer might be caused by a gene alteration being passed on in your family
- Whether genetic testing may be useful to you and/or other family members
- The counselor often uses computerized risk assessment tools to help estimate your cancer risk
- Specific ways to lower your risk for cancer and ways to detect cancer early when it is most easily treated

What if genetic testing is indicated?

If, based upon your family and medical history, genetic testing is indicated, we will:

- Discuss the potential benefits and limitations of genetic testing
- Answer any questions you may have about cost of testing and insurance coverage
- Discuss current laws about the privacy of genetic information - Health insurance companies cannot discriminate against or penalize you based on genetic test results
- Coordinate the appropriate testing
- Review genetic test results and explain what they mean for you and other family members
- Discuss how to manage your cancer risk and options for screening and prevention



After your visit(s), a letter summarizing the information discussed, as well as any test results, will be sent to you and your referring doctor.

For more information about SSM Cancer Care Genetic Services or to schedule an appointment, please call Laura Waldman, MS, Certified Genetic Counselor at **314-577-5639**.

SSM St. Mary's Health Center

6420 Clayton Rd., Richmond Heights, MO 63117

SSM St. Joseph Medical Park

1475 Kisker Rd., St. Charles, MO 63304



SSM Cancer Care

ssmhealth.com/cancer