
The Role of Genetics in Cancer Diagnosis

Is prostate cancer genetic?

Most cancers, including prostate cancer, are due to a combination of inherited factors and environmental exposures, including diet and lifestyle. Genetic factors are clearly important for prostate cancer but all men are at risk.

What genes are involved in prostate cancer?

Approximately two dozen genes or chromosomal regions are currently implicated in prostate cancer.

My father (brother, son) has prostate cancer. Am I at risk?

Yes, family history is an important risk factor.

If I have prostate cancer, will my sons have prostate cancer?

Having a family history of prostate cancer increases risk in close relatives, but, in most situations, it is more likely that they will not develop prostate cancer.

After having a prostate biopsy, my doctor says I have prostate cancer. What are the chances another family member will develop prostate cancer? Should we have tests to determine their risk?

The answer to this is complex and depends on your family history, medical history, lifestyle and genetic information. If you and/or your blood relatives developed prostate cancer at a young age, if there are three or more close relatives with prostate cancer, and/or there is a family history of other cancers, genetic testing may be appropriate for your family. The NorthShore University HealthSystem's Center for Medical Genetics can assist you with determining the answer.

Is genetic testing covered by health insurance?

Most insurers cover the cost of genetic testing.

How can I get in touch with a genetic counselor?

Talk with your oncologist or primary care provider about obtaining a referral to the NorthShore Center for Medical Genetics.

For further information about genetic counseling please call the Center for Medical Genetics at (847) 570-1029 or access our website at www.northshore.org/clinicalservices/medicalgenetics.