
HOW IS THE SAMPLE COLLECTED?

Collection can be done via a saliva or a blood sample. Both methods are equally accurate. Most often, we start with a saliva sample unless there is a health issue that requires a blood sample (for example, a history of radiation to the head or neck, Sjogren' Syndrome).

The tube is sent for genetic testing. It takes about two to three weeks for the results to come back. A follow-up appointment is scheduled to discuss the results and additional treatments, as well as risk reduction strategies for those who test positive for any of the genes.

The staff at Penn Highlands General Surgery is excited to offer these types of advanced cancer-fighting services in our region so that patients no longer have to travel for the peace of mind that genetic testing can provide.

For more information, talk to your family physician or contact the office at 814-375-4000.



PENN HIGHLANDS GENERAL SURGERY

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June 2024

GENETIC TESTING AND COUNSELING SERVICES

For Hereditary Cancer



GENETIC TESTING AND COUNSELING SERVICES

Dr. Kelley Smith, board certified general surgeon, and Melissa Hilliard, PA-C, of Penn Highlands General Surgery, are pleased to provide local genetic testing and counseling services for hereditary cancer.

WHO SHOULD GET TESTED?

Those who:

- Have a personal or family history of multiple related cancers
- Have a personal or family history of breast cancer at a young age (*before age 50*)
- Have a personal or family history of bilateral breast cancer
- Have a personal or family history of ovarian, primary peritoneal, fallopian tube, or male breast cancer
- Have a personal or family history of breast or ovarian cancer along with Ashkenazi Jewish ancestry
- Have had more than 10 colon polyps in their lifetime

Patients in a high-risk category for cancer can be referred directly to Penn Highlands General Surgery, where they meet with the staff to discuss what can be gained from genetic testing and the limitations of the results. The initial visit also involves discussions on insurance coverage, the physiology of the genetic mutations, completion of a family history pedigree,

review of consents and the patient's protection under the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act.

Once the results of the initial appointment are finalized, the providers will develop risk models and provide the patient with the results as well as a copy of his or her reports. The results will be reviewed and the options for management will be discussed. Patients with negative results will have their risk of cancer calculated to determine the appropriate management strategies

WHY GET TESTING?

The best reason for the genetic testing is that there are multiple options for advanced management if a diagnosis is discovered through the testing, as opposed to finding out about a cancer diagnosis once symptoms present.

Those who are tested in advance have a personalized cancer risk assessment that allows the patient and his or her physician to monitor the patient's health and the ability to arrange risk reducing strategies. For those with a diagnosis, the testing also helps the patient and his or her physician to discuss and coordinate potential treatments, such as surgeries, in advance.

Many patients note that the testing also provides relief from anxiety and uncertainty surrounding their potential risks of cancer and the looming threat of advanced disease if not diagnosed at an early stage.

Through the collaboration, Penn Highlands General Surgery is also able to provide patients with direct access to a genetic counselor.

WHAT ARE WE TESTING FOR?

There are a variety of panels and genes that can be tested depending on a patient's personal and family history. The tests ordered are customized to suit the needs of each individual.