



GENETIC COUNSELLING FOR MITOCHONDRIAL DISEASES

Genetic counselling provides you and your family with information about the nature, inheritance, and implications of genetic disorders to help you make informed medical and personal decisions.

WHY SEE A GENETIC COUNSELLOR?

You may be interested in consulting a genetic counsellor to get more information about the mitochondrial disease and how it may affect your family. A genetic counsellor can also provide you with information about genetic testing and

the implications of the results. Finally, you may choose to ask a genetic counsellor about reproductive options if you or other family members are concerned about passing on the mitochondrial disease to future children.

The genetics team may include all or a few of the following health professionals:

- **Genetic counsellor:** specialised graduate health professionals who provide families with tailored information and support regarding the specific genetic condition
- **Clinical geneticist:** a specialist medical practitioner who works in conjunction with the individual's other doctors to find a genetic diagnosis for the family
- **Social workers:** who work closely with medical genetics and support groups to provide additional psychosocial support to families.

The consultation is tailored to the individual or the family's needs and typically involves the following:

- Discussing information about the specific type of mitochondrial disease that affects your family
- Discussing genetic testing and the potential results
- Collecting relevant information about the immediate and extended family to draw up a family tree (genetic services may contact you before the consultation to collect this information)
- Assistance with decision-making
- Identifying people that may be at risk, based on the family tree
- Referrals to support groups
- Assessing the risk of you and you partner passing on the mitochondrial disease to potential children, including a discussion of alternative reproductive options and testing options during pregnancy
- Support and advice for the adult or child affected by the mitochondrial disease

The best way to **access genetic counselling** is via referral by a general practitioner or other medical specialist.

Genetic counselling services in Australia:
www.genetics.edu.au/Genetics-Services/genetic-counselling-services