How long will my appointment last?

Every appointment is different, but they usually last about 45 minutes. Appointments may take place in person, by video, or by telephone.

When will I get an appointment with a genetics counsellor?

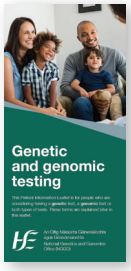
We cannot say exactly when you will be offered an appointment with a genetic counsellor. The clinical genetics department you have been referred to may be able to advise you of waiting times. They follow guidelines which help them determine how long you will have to wait for an appointment.

Consent and confidentiality

You will need to consent to any genetic or genomic testing. This means you agree to the test after understanding its purpose, benefits, possible results, and risks.

Your information will be kept confidential.

If there is a need to share your results, for example, with another healthcare professional, they will only be shared with your consent.



Other patient information leaflets available are:

Genetic and genomic testing

Support and further information

There is a network of patient support groups that can help you through your experience.

You can access these groups at any time in the process. Please see some support groups listed below.

Rare Ireland	www.rareireland.ie
Irish Cancer Society	www.cancer.ie
Irish Maternity Support Network	www.maternitysupport.ie



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About your appointment with a

Genetic Counsellor

This Patient Information Leaflet is for people who have been offered an appointment with a genetic counsellor. This leaflet explains what a genetic counsellor does, and how they can help you and your family learn more about genetic conditions.

An Oifig Náisiúnta Géineolaíochta agus Géanómaíochta
National Genetics and Genomics Office (NGGO)

What is a genetic counsellor?

A genetic counsellor is a healthcare professional with specialist training in clinical genetics, genomics, and counselling. They can help you or your family understand genetic conditions, arrange genetic and genomic testing, and offer guidance for your future care.

What is the difference between a genetic and genomic test?

A genetic test looks at a single gene or a small number of genes at a time. The test may look for a single variant or several variants of genes.

A genomic test looks at many genes, sometimes 20,000 to 25,000 genes at once.

Genetic counsellors can:

- Help you to understand the benefits and risks of genetic and genomic testing.
- Help you to decide whether to get a test. Testing is your choice.
- Arrange genetic or genomic testing and explain your results.
- Explain the signs and symptoms of genetic conditions.
- Discuss your family planning options.

- Explain how genetic conditions are inherited and what this might mean for you and your family.
- Talk about sharing genetic information with your family.
- Offer guidance on how to manage genetic conditions.
- Refer you for health screening of genetic conditions and to get advice or treatment for management of symptoms.

Genetic counsellors can help you or your family understand genetic conditions, arrange genetic and genomic testing, and offer guidance for your future care. When you know more, you are better able to ask questions and get the best answers available at the time. Normally they do not diagnose (identify) genetic conditions. They work with you, other healthcare professionals, and clinical geneticists to support you to understand the impact a familial genetic condition may have for you and your family.

Why have I been referred to a genetic counsellor?

You or your child may have been referred to a genetic counsellor for lots of reasons. Some of these might include:

- You or your child has features which might suggest a genetic condition.
- Your family member or partner has a genetic condition, and you want to understand what it means for you and your family.

- You have a genetic condition that could be passed on to your children or future children.
- You want to discuss the results of a genetic or genomic test.
- You are pregnant and there is a known genetic condition in your family.

If you are not sure why you have been referred to a genetic counsellor, please ask your doctor.

What will happen at my appointment?

Each appointment is different, but the genetic counsellor will likely speak to you about your:

- **Personal medical history:** your genetic counsellor will ask you about your or your child's medical history.
- **Family medical history:** they will also ask you about your family's medical history. This will include questions to see if any of your family members have ever been diagnosed with a genetic condition.

If genetic or genomic testing is appropriate for you, a genetic counsellor will help you understand the testing process, its benefits and risks, and what the results may mean for you and your family. They will also try to answer any questions you might have.