

Am I Eligible for Genetic Testing?

In this short guide, **genetic counselor, Carla McGruder** from Color helps you understand what genetic testing can tell you about cancer risk and when it's recommended.



Q: How often is cancer “genetic”?

This is one of the most common questions genetic counselors hear. The answer is: not as often as many people think. **Only about 5–10% of cancers are hereditary**, meaning they are caused by a gene mutation that can be passed down from parent to child. Most cancers happen because of a mix of factors, including age, environment, lifestyle, and random changes that build up in cells over time. ‘

Hereditary cancer risk is important to identify because it can change medical care. Genetic testing may help guide screening, treatment decisions, and provide useful information for family members.

Q: How do you determine who is eligible for genetic testing?

We look for patterns in your personal or family history that may suggest a higher chance of hereditary cancer risk.

At Color, we use evidence-based guidelines, including guidelines from the National Comprehensive Cancer Network, or NCCN, to help determine who is most likely to benefit from testing. This includes factors like the type of cancer, age at diagnosis, multiple cancers in one person, several relatives with related cancers, a known mutation in the family, or certain ancestries, such as Ashkenazi Jewish ancestry.

You do not need to have had cancer yourself. Family history alone can sometimes be enough to qualify.

Not sure whether your history counts? It's worth asking. Many people are surprised to learn they're eligible, and if you're not, we'll explain what that means and what steps you can take next.

Q: I'm adopted. Am I eligible for genetic testing?

If you were adopted or don't have access to your family's medical history, you may still be eligible for testing based on your personal history or ancestry. Please contact our clinical team to discuss your specific situation.

What if I'm not eligible for genetic testing?

A “not eligible” result means that, based on current guidelines, genetic testing is unlikely to change your medical care right now.

That does not mean your cancer risk is zero, or that screening is not important. We recommend staying up to date on routine screenings and check-ups based on your age, health history, and your doctor’s recommendations.

It’s also important to keep your family history updated. If someone in your family is newly diagnosed with cancer, your eligibility could change.

Not sure whether your situation was fully captured? Reach out to us. Some histories fall into a gray area, and our clinical team can help you understand what makes sense next.

Questions?

Color is available to answer your questions, review your history, and help you understand your options.

 Email: support@color.com  Phone: (844) 352-6567.

This document is for informational purposes only and does not constitute medical advice. Eligibility criteria are based on current clinical guidelines and are subject to change. Please consult with a qualified healthcare provider for personalized guidance.