Mission

Our Cancer Genetics Program aims to help patients and families with a history of cancer better understand and manage their cancer risk. We provide individuals with important information to assist in early detection, proactive prevention and refined cancer management by:

- Performing a detailed cancer risk assessment with genetic counseling
- Facilitating and interpreting genetic testing when appropriate
- Providing an individualized cancer screening and prevention plan

www.sjo.org/cancergenetics
Services
Approximately 5-10% of people with cancer have a hereditary form, or predisposition to cancer. Hereditary cancer is the result of changes in genetic information which increase the risk of certain types of cancer. These changes in the genetic information are passed on in families, from generation to generation. Considered the cutting edge of medicine in this decade, genetics testing capabilities shift the focus of cancer from treatment to preventive strategies.

Which Patients Are Appropriate for Referral for Genetic Cancer Risk Assessment?
Specific criteria can be found on the program website: www.sjo.org/cancergenetics. Many health insurance providers now cover genetic testing for people who have a strong personal or family history of cancer.

General red flags for hereditary cancer syndromes include:
• cancer diagnosis at a younger than expected age (typically under age 50 yrs)
• multiple primary cancers in one individual
• the same type of cancer in two or more close relatives
• rare tumors
• specific family cancer patterns (such as breast and ovarian; colon and uterine; melanoma and pancreatic)

For many hereditary cancer syndromes, genetic testing is available and can potentially identify the cause of cancer in the family and quantify the future cancer risks. Here is a brief look at what your patient can expect during a hereditary cancer risk evaluation:

• Evaluation and Genetic Counseling: A brief telephone intake will be performed to review personal and family history, to explain program services, and to schedule an initial consultation. We ask all new patients to complete a personal history questionnaire and family history form. The information in these forms allows the genetic counselor to assess medical and family history and current healthcare practices. Next, an evaluation and genetic counseling session will take place, genetic testing options will be discussed and, depending on the level of assessed risk, a plan of care will be determined.

Benefits to Referring Physicians
Cancer risk evaluation and genetic counseling is a collaborative effort between many healthcare providers. Our Cancer Genetics Program includes experts in: Genetic Counseling, Cancer Risk Assessment, Medical Oncology and Surgery. Together, these specialists assess and develop management plans that effectively address a number of hereditary cancer syndromes and familial occurrences of cancer.

We provide detailed consultation reports to the patient and referring physician. Your patient will always be advised to return to his/her managing physician/s after the hereditary cancer risk evaluation is completed.

When & How to Refer
To refer a patient, to schedule an appointment, or for more information on our Cancer Genetics Program, please call: (714) 771-8293 or visit us at: www.sjo.org/cancergenetics.

About the St. Joseph Hospital Cancer Institute
The Cancer Genetics Program is part of the St. Joseph Hospital Cancer Institute, which offers world-class cancer care that integrates technology, research and extensive experience with a patient-centered focus encompassing the whole person – mind, body and spirit.

Led by physicians and staff dedicated to clinical excellence, we offer state-of-the-art technology for early detection and treatment; targeted therapeutics and cutting edge research to find more effective and less invasive treatments, and eventually we hope, a cure. Our multidisciplinary team approach to site-specific care achieves survival rates that exceed state and national standards. While compassionate care is the focal point of all patient interactions, our Nurse Navigators add additional peace of mind by assisting patients through the continuum of care, providing emotional support as well as education and access to community resources.

Defeating cancer is our life’s work.

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