

If you or someone in your family is considering genetic testing or wondering if a certain health condition could run in your family, or if you are pregnant and interested in learning more about genetic testing options during pregnancy, a genetic counselor is an outstanding resource.

## WHY?

- Genetic counselors can help you sort through complex information to understand the meaning of genetic tests so you can make informed decisions about what testing options, if any, are best for you.
- Genetic counselors strive to be *non-directive*. In other words, genetic counselors want to provide up-to-date, accurate and balanced information to help you make decisions about genetic testing that is right for you.
- Genetic counselors' unique education allows them not only to be experts on the science of genetics, but also on the emotional impact of this information on individuals and families. Genetic counselors can help you identify support resources when needed.
- Genetic counselors typically spend from 30 minutes to an hour or more making sure that you have the information you need and that all of your questions are answered.

## Will the genetic counselor tell me what to do about my pregnancy or whether to undergo genetic testing?

**To the Point:** *Genetic counselors will provide you with the information you need to make the decisions that are right for you, but they will not tell you what to do.*

Genetic counselors do their very best to give you information in a non-biased way and make sure you understand the information to make decisions that are most consistent with your own beliefs and values. You may have had an experience of seeing a healthcare professional and having them make recommendations or tell you what to do. When it comes to whether or not to undergo genetic testing (for example, in your pregnancy) and what to do with that information, genetic counselors believe that these decisions are very personal. Genetic counselors will not tell you what to do, but they will give you the tools to make informed decisions and support you along the way, whatever path you are on.