



Health Professionals and Genetic Testing

What you need to know

1. Why perform molecular genetic testing?

Molecular genetic testing may be performed to detect and confirm genetic diseases or heritable conditions, to identify increased risks for health problems, and to choose or monitor response to treatment for a condition.

2. What information should the laboratory provide to help me make an informed decision on choosing a molecular genetic test?

- the genetic tests that they offer and the purposes of these tests
- how the test works and what the test will tell you
- who will benefit from testing?
- whether the test is FDA cleared or approved
- the laboratory's federal certification or accreditation status
- how to collect and send the laboratory a specimen for testing
- what advice or consultation is available from the laboratory?
- an estimated cost

3. What information will the laboratory require from me?

- several state and local governments require the patient or the patient's guardian sign an agreement that says they understand and agree to have a laboratory test performed
- the patient's name or identifier, date of birth, and health information related to the test
- some tests need more information such as race and ethnicity, and family medical history

4. What should I expect the test results to include?

- the date of the report with the name and address of the laboratory
- the patient's name or identifier, date of birth and why the patient was tested
- the date and time the specimen was collected
- the name of the person that ordered the test
- the name of the test and how it works
- the results and an explanation of what they mean
- some tests may indicate a need for genetic counseling and whether the patient's relatives may be affected

5. Are molecular genetic test results confidential?

Yes. Laboratories must keep all patient information confidential, including genetic test information.

6. How long is genetic test information stored by the laboratory?

The laboratory should keep molecular genetic test results on file for at least 25 years for health care and quality assurance purposes.

For additional information go to: <http://www.cdc.gov/dls/moleculartesting>

