

What is a genetic counselor?

Genetic counselors are health professionals with expertise in the areas of medical genetics and counseling.

In the prenatal setting, genetic counselors work with OB/GYNs, maternal fetal medicine specialists and other health care providers to offer information and support to those whose baby may be at risk for birth defects, intellectual disability and/or a genetic or inherited condition. Genetic counselors meet with women, couples, and families to explain the risks for a pregnancy.

During a genetic counseling session, the genetic counselor will review your family and pregnancy history, explain the condition and risks, discuss testing options and help guide you through the testing process.

There is a small risk for a birth defect in all pregnancies. In some cases that chance is increased and genetic counselors are there to educate, listen and support their patients. Prenatal genetic counseling is also useful for couples planning a pregnancy to understand their risks before conception.



Reasons to see a Genetic Counselor

- Women who will be 35 or older at delivery
- Prenatal tests results that show an increased risk for Down syndrome, spina bifida, or other problems
- Ultrasound findings
- Personal or family history of a genetic condition or birth defect
- Drug or medication use in pregnancy
- A history of infertility or multiple miscarriages

“Understanding the risks really helped reduce my anxiety about my baby.”

The majority of babies are born healthy, but every pregnant woman worries about the health of her unborn baby. Genetic conditions and birth defects can occur even without a family history. Genetic counselors can help you understand those risks and answer your questions .

My husband and I waited to start our family. Now I am “Advanced Maternal Age”. What does that mean?

My first cousin has a bleeding problem. Is it inherited, and will my baby have the same thing?

My doctor saw something on my ultrasound. We are so scared and don't understand what it is and why my baby has a problem.



Will I need to have genetic testing?

A genetic counselor will discuss with you the benefits and risks of tests such as ultrasound, blood tests, and invasive prenatal diagnosis, based upon your specific situation.

The choice of whether or not to pursue testing is up to you. Only you can know what information you need. The goal of a genetic counseling session is to inform you of all of your options to allow you to make the best decision for your family.



Where can I get more information or schedule an appointment with a genetic counselor?

The Greenwood Genetic Center provides prenatal genetic counseling services in Greenwood and Greenville. Contact the office nearest you for more information.

Greenwood

106 Gregor Mendel Circle
Greenwood, SC 29646
1-888-442-4363 (toll free)
(864) 941-8100

Greenville

14 Edgewood Drive
Greenville, SC 29605
1-866-478-4363 (toll free)
(864)250-7944
(864) 455-1600 (prenatal counselors)

Prenatal Genetic Counseling



This brochure is published by the Greenwood Genetic Center, a nonprofit institute organized to provide clinical genetic services, diagnostic laboratory testing, educational programs and materials and research in the field of medical genetics.