



# Will my child have a hearing loss?

*Many young adults with a hearing impairment become concerned about their children inheriting a hearing loss. As you grow up you may wonder what caused your hearing loss and what are the chances of having a child with hearing problems when you start a family.*

## CAUSES OF HEARING LOSS

There can be many reasons for hearing loss. Sometimes the cause of the hearing loss is quite clear; from a serious illness such as meningitis or from an illness during pregnancy such as German measles. Sometimes there is a history of hearing impairment in the family.

However, it's not uncommon for the cause of the hearing loss to be unknown.

## GENETIC DEAFNESS

If no other cause can be found for your hearing loss, then it is possible that the cause is genetic. This means that you have a greater chance than most people of having a child with a hearing loss.

Medical knowledge is improving all the time and there may now be tests that will tell you the cause of your hearing impairment. Apart from new tests, recent research has uncovered a new gene for recessive hearing loss – that is, a hereditary loss where there is little family history of hearing problems.

To find out why you have a hearing problem and what the chances are of having a child with a hearing loss too, you can see a genetic counsellor.

## WHAT IS GENETIC COUNSELLING?

Genetic counselling is provided by a team of health professionals who work together to provide an individual or family with current information and supportive counselling (advice or guidance) regarding problems in growth, development and health that may have a genetic basis. This can assist families and individuals to understand and adjust to the diagnosis of a genetic condition.

## WHAT HAPPENS IN GENETIC COUNSELLING?

### Consultation

During a consultation, a family health history is taken to provide information about the health of family members. A diagnosis of a genetic condition may be made or confirmed in a pregnancy, after birth, in childhood or later in life. The diagnosis may be made on the basis of clinical features, biochemical tests or genetic tests.

Where there is a genetic condition in a family, the genetic counsellor can estimate the risks of other family members, or future children being affected. Often you can be reassured to find out that a condition is unlikely to reoccur in your family. When a condition is diagnosed in a family, the impact and possible effects on the individual and their family can be discussed in a supportive atmosphere.

Management strategies can be developed and referral provided to appropriate community resources, including support groups. Both verbal and written information about the condition and its impact is provided to assist people in dealing with some of the issues that may arise from the diagnosis of a genetic condition.

### Follow up

After the initial consultation, an opportunity is provided to go over the information and for on-going support as families and individuals learn about the condition. It is very common for people to think of many questions after the genetic counselling session, and new questions can also arise as the condition develops. Follow-up can be provided in further consultations, if geographically possible, or by telephone.

### Who provides genetic counselling?

The health professional team providing genetic counselling may consist of clinical geneticists, genetic counsellors and social workers.

**Clinical Geneticists** are medical practitioners with a specialist qualification in clinical genetics.

**Genetic Counsellors** are graduate health professionals with specialist training, certified by the Human Genetics Society of Australasia (HGSA) to provide genetic counselling.

**Social Workers** with a special interest in genetics and particular genetic conditions, work closely with clinical geneticists, genetic counsellors and support groups.

### GENETIC COUNSELLING SERVICES IN EACH STATE

It is preferable to have a referral to Genetic Counselling through your GP although some services will allow you to self refer. Speak with your audiologist who will be able to guide you.

The following address list may be helpful:

METROPOLITAN NEW SOUTH WALES			CONTACT
<b>CAMPERDOWN</b>	Royal Prince Alfred Hospital	Molecular and Clinical Genetics Unit, Missenden Road, Camperdown NSW 2050	Ph: (02) 9515 5080 Fax: (02) 9515 7595
<b>KOGARAH</b>	St George Hospital	Women's and Children's Health, Kogarah, NSW 2217	Tel: (02) 9350 3635 Fax: (02) 9350 3901
<b>LIVERPOOL</b>	Liverpool Health Services	Clinical Genetics Unit, Locked Bag 7103, Liverpool, BC 1871	Ph: (02) 9828 4665 Fax: (02) 9828 4650
<b>NEWCASTLE</b>	Newcastle Western Suburbs Hospital	Regional Medical Genetics Unit, PO Box 84, Waratah, NSW 2298	Ph: (02) 4985 3100 Fax: (02) 4985 3105
<b>PENRITH</b>	Nepean Hospital	Clinical Genetics Department, Penrith, NSW 2750	Tel: (02) 4734 3362 Fax: (02) 4734 2567
<b>RANDWICK</b>	The Sydney Children's Hospital	Department of Medical Genetics, Randwick, NSW 2031	Ph: (02) 9382 1704 Fax: (02) 9382 1711
<b>ST LEONARDS</b>	Royal North Shore Hospital	St Leonards, NSW 2065	Ph: (02) 9926 6478 Fax: (02) 9926 7880
<b>WESTMEAD</b>	The Children's Hospital	Clinical Genetics Unit, Westmead, NSW	Ph: (02) 9845 3273 Fax: (02) 9845 3204

REGIONAL CENTRES IN NEW SOUTH WALES			CONTACT
<b>BATHURST</b>		158 William Street, BATHURST NSW 2795	Tel: (02) 6331 5533 Fax: (02) 6332 2039
<b>BROKEN HILL</b>	Community Health Centre	BROKEN HILL NSW 2880	Tel: (02) 8080 1554 Fax: (02) 8080 1611
<b>COFFS HARBOUR</b>	Community Health Centre	Locked Mail Bag 812, Cnr High & Boambee Sts NSW 2450	Tel: (02) 6656 7000 Fax: (02) 6656 7687
<b>FORSTER</b>	Forster Community Health Centre	Breeze Pde, FORSTER NSW 2428	Tel: (02) 6555 6822 Fax: (02) 6554 8874
<b>GOSFORD</b>	Child and Family Health Gateway Centre	PO Box 361 GOSFORD 2250	Tel: (02) 4328 7994 Fax: (02) 4328 7925
<b>GOULBURN</b>	Child Development Unit	Locked Bag 15, Cnr Goldsmith and Faithful Streets GOULBURN NSW 2580	Tel: (02) 4827 3951 Fax: (02) 4827 3958
<b>KEMPSEY</b>	Port Macquarie Community Health Centre		Tel: (02) 6588 2882 Fax: (02) 6588 2800
<b>MUDGEE</b>	Macquarie Area Health Service	PO Box 29, MUDGEE NSW 2805	Tel: (02) 6378 6236 Fax: (02) 6372 7341
<b>MUSWELLBROOK</b>	Community Health Centre	Brentwood Street, PO Box 120 MUSWELLBROOK NSW 2333	Tel: (02) 6542 2050 Fax: (02) 6542 2005
<b>NORTH COAST</b>	Lismore Base Hospital	PO Box 419, LISMORE NSW 2480	Tel: (02) 66250 111 Fax: (02) 66250 102
<b>PORT MACQUARIE</b>	Hastings Community Health Centre	Morton Street, PORT MACQUARIE NSW 2444	Tel: (02) 6588 2882 Fax: (02) 6588 2800
<b>TAMWORTH</b>	Community Health Centre	180 Peel Street, TAMWORTH NSW 2340	Tel: (02) 6766 2555 Fax: (02) 6766 3967



REGIONAL CENTRES IN NEW SOUTH WALES			CONTACT
<b>TAREE</b>	Community Health Centre	22 York Street, TAREE NSW 2480	Tel: (02) 6592 9703 Fax: (02) 6592 9607
<b>WAGGA WAGGA</b>	Wagga Base Hospital	Cnr Edward and Docker Sts PO Box 159, WAGGA WAGGA NSW 2650	Tel: (02) 6938 6666 Fax: (02) 6921 5632
<b>WOLLONGONG</b>	Wollongong Hospital	Illawarra Genetic Counselling Service, Private Mail Bag 8808, South Coast Mail Centre, NSW 2521	Ph: (02) 4253 4267 Fax: (02) 4253 4257

OTHER STATES AND TERRITORIES IN AUSTRALIA			CONTACT
<b>AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY</b>	The Canberra Hospital	Mail: PO Box 11, WODEN ACT 2606	Tel: (06) 6244 4042 Fax: (02) 6282 2844
<b>NORTHERN TERRITORY</b>	Women's and Children's Hospital	Mail: South Australian Clinical Genetics, Department of Medical Genetics NORTH ADELAIDE SA 5006	Tel: (08) 8161 7375 or (08) 8161 7010 Fax: (08) 8204 6088
<b>QUEENSLAND</b>	Royal Children's Hospital	Mail: Herston Road, HERSTON, QLD 4029	Ph: (07) 3636 1686 Fax: (07) 3636 1987
<b>SOUTH AUSTRALIA</b>	Women's and Children's Hospital	South Australian Clinical Genetics, NORTH ADELAIDE, SA 5006, Department of Medical Genetics	Ph: (08) 8161 7375 or (08) 8161 7010 Fax: (08) 8161 6088
<b>TASMANIA</b>	Royal Hobart Hospital	Genetics Services (Tas), HOBART, TAS 7000	Tel: (03) 6222 8296 Fax: (03) 6222 7961 Mobile: 0408 127 363 or 0438 213 145
<b>VICTORIA</b>	Royal Children's Hospital	Victorian Clinical Genetics Service PARKVILLE VIC 3052	Ph: (03) 8341 6201 Fax: (03) 8341 6390
<b>WESTERN AUSTRALIA</b>	King Edward Memorial Hospital	Genetic Services of Western Australia, 374 Bagot Road, SUBIACO WA 6008	Ph: (08) 9340 1525 Fax: (08) 9340 1678



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