

Victorian Family Cancer Register

The Victorian Family Cancer Register, managed by Cancer Council Victoria and funded by the Department of Health and Human Services ceased to operate on 30 June, 2016.

For many years the Register supported families with an inherited risk of developing cancer. Individuals who consented to the Register were notified about the closure and encouraged to contact their medical practitioner or a family cancer centre with any health concerns.

For information about the closure visit www.cancervic.org.au/family-cancer or call the Cancer Council on 13 11 20.

Family Cancer Centres

Austin Health Clinical Genetics Service

Austin Hospital
Studley Road
Heidelberg Vic 3084
Ph: (03) 9496 3027
Fax: (03) 9496 4385
www.austin.org.au/genetics

The Peter Mac Familial Cancer Centre

Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre
St Andrews Place
East Melbourne Vic 3002
Ph: (03) 9656 1199
Fax: (03) 9656 1539
www.petermac.org

The RMH Familial Cancer Centre

The Royal Melbourne Hospital
Grattan St
Parkville Vic 3050
Ph: (03) 9342 7151
Fax: (03) 9342 4267
www.mh.org.au/RMHgenetics

The Southern Health Familial Cancer Centre

Southern Health / Monash Medical Centre
246 Clayton Road
Clayton Vic 3168
Ph: (03) 9594 2009
Fax: (03) 9594 6046



Visiting a family cancer centre





One in two Australians will develop cancer in their lifetime. It is therefore not uncommon for several members of the same family to develop cancer, though in most cases the cancers will be unrelated.

However, for a small number of people, their family history suggests they may have a faulty gene, which means their chance of developing cancer is much higher than the average population.

This brochure is for people with a family history of cancer to help them decide if they would benefit from visiting a family cancer centre.

When cancer runs in the family

While most cases of cancer are not due to genetics, there is a possibility that cancer may run in your family if on one side:

- there are several family members who have cancers of the same type
- there are several cases of rare cancers
- family members have developed cancer before the age of 50
- family members have developed more than one cancer (for example cancer in both breasts)
- a relative has been found to carry a faulty gene that increases their risk of cancer.

Family cancer centres offer a range of services.

A small proportion of a range of cancers are associated with an inherited risk. Cancers more commonly linked with an inherited risk include:

- breast
- ovarian
- bowel
- endometrial
- melanoma
- kidney
- stomach
- brain
- prostate

If your close relatives have had any of these cancers, your doctor can assess your family history, and if appropriate, refer you to a family cancer centre.

The role of a family cancer centre

Family cancer centres offer a range of services for people concerned about their risk of cancer due to a family history of the disease. Services include:

- assessing a person's risk of cancer
- genetic counselling and testing
- medical advice including information about early detection and prevention
- psychological support
- opportunities to participate in research.

Family cancer centres in Victoria are funded by the Department of Health. A visit to a family cancer centre is free of charge and all information is treated confidentially.

Referral to a family cancer centre

There are two ways to contact a family cancer centre:

- your doctor can refer you (preferred), or
- you can call a centre directly to discuss an appointment.

What will happen?

Following an initial telephone call, you will most likely be asked to complete a questionnaire about your family history of cancer. Your responses will be reviewed to estimate your inherited risk of cancer.

If appropriate, you will be invited to the family cancer centre to discuss your family history and its implications for you, as well as suitable options for early detection and prevention. This first appointment will take about an hour and you may need further appointments.

After attending a family cancer centre you will receive a detailed letter about your consultation, including recommendations for follow-up care. A copy of the letter will also be sent to your nominated doctor.

Who will I see?

You may see a genetic counsellor, medical geneticist, and/or other medical specialists with expertise in familial cancer.

Will I be offered genetic testing?

Depending on your family history and circumstances, it may be possible to have a genetic test to find out if you are carrying a known faulty gene. Genetic testing is limited to identifying genes which are known to increase the risk of certain types of cancer.

Genetic testing is only offered with genetic counselling as it is important to discuss and understand the advantages and disadvantages of having a test.

