



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**NATIONAL SOCIETY OF GENETIC COUNSELORS RECOMMENDS ASKING
QUESTIONS BEFORE CONSIDERING GENETIC TESTING**

CHICAGO – NOVEMBER 30, 2007 – Individuals who are considering genetic testing should ask five key questions and meet with someone who is specially trained in genetics to help them understand and interpret the test results, according to the National Society of Genetic Counselors (NSGC), the sole professional organization in the United States for genetic counselors.

“A genetic counselor can help you interpret your family medical history, determine if a genetic test is available and appropriate, and help you decide whether you should go ahead with testing,” said Cathy Wicklund, president, NSGC. “Many people who undergo genetic counseling decide against testing because their potential risk is low or because they don’t want this information. Others decide to move forward with testing.”

Genetic counselors have specialized graduate degrees and experience in the areas of medical genetics and counseling. They can discuss what emotional and medical impact the test results will have on the patient and family, provide information on possible interventions and refer patients to support services, said Wicklund.

NSGC recommends individuals ask the following questions before they consider undergoing genetic testing:

1. **Is the correct test being ordered?** Discuss with your genetic counselor which test(s) specifically address your medical concerns. There are many genetic tests, each of which tests for a different medical condition. If the wrong test is ordered, it may not give you accurate information about your medical concerns.
2. **How valid are the test results?** Some test results will be clear, while others will be inconclusive or require additional testing.
3. **What decisions might you need or want to make once you know the results?** Consider the implications of having the test and the impact it could have on you and your family, both medically, emotionally and in terms of life planning.

4. **What are the credentials of the person who will give you the test results?** It is important that someone who has expertise in genetics helps you understand and interpret your test results. For example, genetic counselors have specialized training in medical genetics and counseling and earn Master's degrees in their field.
5. **Once you have the test results, what are your next steps?** Take time to learn more about what these results mean for your health and who else in your family may be at risk and need this information.

For more information or to find a genetic counselor in your area, visit www.nsgc.org.

About the National Society of Genetic Counselors

NSGC is the leading voice, authority and advocate for the genetic counseling profession. Membership represents more than 2,300 masters-level health professionals, most of whom provide direct patient care (totaling over one million visits per year). Members are employed in a wide range of clinical care, academic, research and biotechnology settings, and are located in every state of the U.S. and internationally. The organization is committed to ensuring that the public has access to genetic counseling and genetic testing. Visit NSGC at www.nsgc.org.

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