



# COULD IT BE GENETIC?

You may have questions about birth defects or other problems in your child, other family members or yourself.

## **Anyone can have a birth defect or genetic disorder.**

### ***Genetic Evaluation and Genetic Counseling may be most helpful if:***

- An individual in your family has:
  - More than one birth defect
  - Developmental delay/mental retardation
  - Physical features that differ from the rest of the family
  - Growth problems
- Someone in your family has a known genetic disorder
- You are concerned that you or your child's problems might be related to alcohol or drugs used during pregnancy
- Certain health problems seem to "run" in your family

### ***Genetic Consultation Services may help answer the following questions:***

- Why did this happen?
- What can we expect in the future?
- Is there a test to detect this?
- Will this happen again?
- Can this be detected in future pregnancies?
- Where can we go for help?

***The genetics doctor and genetic counselor will respect your feelings and beliefs.***

## **What should you expect at a genetic evaluation?**

- Before the visit you will be contacted to get medical and family history information, and to make an appointment for the genetic consultation.
- At the appointment, you and your child will be seen by a genetic counselor and/or a doctor. The doctor may examine you or your child.
- After the exam, the doctor and/or genetic counselor will discuss their findings with you and may suggest testing. They may tell you about other services available in your area and may suggest a follow-up visit.
- A review of what was discussed can be sent to you and your health provider at your request.

In Washington State, Genetic Counseling is available to all who want it. Each clinic sets its own fees, but can help you if you cannot afford the counseling session.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your primary care provider or local genetics clinic for assistance. To find the nearest genetics clinic in Washington State, either look on the Washington State Department of Health – Genetics Services Section website, <http://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/InfantsChildrenandTeens/HealthandSafety/GeneticServices.aspx>, or call 253-395-6741.

This publication is available on the Washington State Department of Health Website, <http://here.doh.wa.gov>.

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