

What is DNA?

You often hear about the bad guys in TV shows like *CSI* and *Law & Order* being caught by DNA they've left at a crime scene. But do you know what that really means?

Everyone has 46 chromosomes in their cells. 23 chromosomes come from your Mother and 23 chromosomes come from your Father.

Chromosomes are long strands of DNA that contain information such as your eye colour or even an allergy you and your siblings might share.

These are your genes. Your genes are unique to you.



About genetic conditions

Genetic conditions include health or development problems you might see in babies, children, teenagers or adults, depending on the type of condition.

Rare or common genetic conditions you might have heard of include:

- Down syndrome
 - Autism
- Short stature conditions
 - Heart disease
- Some types of deafness



What is genetic counselling?

Genetic counsellors educate people on particular health conditions that might be in their family genes.

They might discuss:

- whether or not they could be affected by the condition
- if it could affect them later in life and if possible, ways to prevent symptoms in the future
- if they could pass the condition on to their children
- how to care for someone in their family who already has the condition.



Where can genetic counsellors work?

Genetic counsellors work with many different patients including:

- Couples who are planning a pregnancy or are already expecting a baby
 - Newborn babies and young children
 - Children with learning difficulties
- Adults who develop symptoms of a genetic condition later in life

Genetic counsellors work in:

- Hospitals
 - Research clinics
 - Private patient clinics
- Special clinics for babies and children

