What do I do now?

There are various options available for people who wish to be screened:

- **Genetics Office**- meet one-on-one with a genetic counselor. The counselor will take a complete family history and will assess the individual’s specific genetic testing needs.

- **Physician’s Office**- most OB/GYN offices are equipped to order Ashkenazi Jewish genetic tests or will refer out to genetics offices.

- **Community Screening Events**- register for a screening event in your area. Our Program’s screenings are planned every few months, so check our website for an upcoming event.

What is most important is not *how* one chooses to get screened, but that they take the initiative to do it. Don’t wait until it is too late.

To make an appointment, call or email us:
Phone: 718.405.8150
Email: jewishgenetichealth@yu.edu

To find out more about our Program and future screening events, visit us online:
www.yu.edu/genetichealth
www.facebook.com/PJGHYU
We don’t get to choose our genes... we inherit them. Some of these genes may carry alterations that cause devastating, even deadly, diseases that wreak havoc in families.

Recent discoveries in genetics have made it possible to identify and empower carriers of these conditions, with the ultimate goal of protecting our future generations.

What you should know
- Our genes come in pairs—-one from each parent. An individual who is a carrier has only one working gene; the gene from the other parent is not working due to a genetic mutation. For diseases that are autosomal recessive, both parents must be carriers of the same disease in order to have an affected child.
- The risk for a carrier couple to have an affected child is 1 in 4 (25%) for each pregnancy.
- Carriers usually do not have a family history of the disease in question. Even though the mutation is being transmitted from generation to generation, many carriers have children with non-carriers, and so the disorder does not emerge.
- 1 in 4 Ashkenazi Jews (Eastern European) will be a carrier for at least one of the diseases. 1 in 100 couples will be “carrier couples.”

Frequently asked questions
1. What if I am a carrier? Speak with a genetic counselor. Have your partner tested, at least for the disease for which you are a carrier. Also, consider notifying your siblings of your carrier status and encourage them to be tested.
2. What if my partner and I both are carriers for the same genetic disorder? There are several options for family planning. A couple may decide to take measures before a conception or once the woman is pregnant. Genetic counselors can discuss these options with you.
3. What if I don’t practice Judaism? How one identifies with their religion does not define their ancestry. If an individual has at least one grandparent who descended from an Ashkenazi Jew, that person is at risk of being a carrier for an Ashkenazi Jewish genetic disease.
4. When is the best time to get screened? The ideal time for screening is well before conception, so that couples can be empowered early with the information they need.
5. What about Sephardic diseases? While Ashkenazi Jews can be viewed as a single group for the purposes of screening “panels,” the Sephardic Jewish community is more diverse. A genetics consultation can provide further information if you are of Sephardic background.
6. Are there other genetic diseases that could affect my children that I should know about? Yes. Spinal muscular atrophy and fragile X syndrome are conditions that are commonly found in the general population, and thus have high carrier frequencies in individuals of Ashkenazi Jewish descent. Speak to a genetic counselor if you are interested in being screened for these conditions.