

# Cardiomyopathy and Arrhythmia

## Genetic Testing: Information for Patients



### Cardiomyopathy and arrhythmia

**Cardiomyopathy** is a condition that weakens the heart muscle, making it harder for the heart to pump blood and deliver oxygen throughout the body.

**Cardiac arrhythmias** cause irregular timing or pattern of heartbeats, either too fast or too slow.

Both cardiomyopathy and arrhythmias can affect people of all ages and sexes. They may be caused by genetic changes that run in families.



### What is genetic testing?

A genetics laboratory looks for changes in many genes at once, usually from a small amount of blood.

Your doctor might order a genetic test that looks for gene changes that cause cardiomyopathy, cardiac arrhythmia, or both at the same time.

There are 3 types of results from a genetic test:

1. A gene change is found that confirms a genetic cause for your heart condition.
2. No gene changes are found. A genetic cause is not confirmed or ruled out. As new genes are discovered you may be offered further testing.
3. A gene change is found, but it is unclear if it is linked to your condition.



### Why is genetic testing important?

A genetic test result may:

- Guide your health care team in making a treatment and management plan for you.
- Help find out the risk of similar heart conditions in your family members, so that their health care team can discuss their options for early detection and prevention.
- Help find out if your blood relatives may also be eligible for genetic testing.



### How to get genetic testing done?

If you and your health care team decide genetic testing is right for you:

- Take your health card and the laboratory requisition from your clinician to a community lab for bloodwork. You can find a lab location at: <https://oaml.com/find-a-location/>. The cost of this test will be covered by OHIP.
- Follow-up with your clinician to discuss the results of your test. Results can take several weeks to several months to complete.
- Tell your family that you are having genetic testing. Share your results with them so they can discuss this information with their own health care team