



What is Next Generation Sequencing (NGS)?

NGS is a high-throughput DNA sequencing technology that allows sequencing of multiple regions of the human genome at one time. This enables the simultaneous analysis of many genes known to be associated with a particular phenotype (i.e. gene panels). For some genes, additional analysis for copy number variants may be performed in conjunction with NGS.

Since not all genes associated with a given phenotype/presentation are known or included in the panel, a pathogenic variant will not be identified for every patient. **The absence of a pathogenic variant does not exclude a clinical diagnosis.**

Testing may identify a genetic variant for which there is currently insufficient evidence to conclude that it is either disease-causing or benign (called a variant of uncertain significance). Such variants cannot be used to alter the clinically established risk of disease.

Why order a NGS panel for my patient?

Phenotypes are often genetically heterogeneous, meaning that the condition is caused by a pathogenic variant(s) in any one of a number of genes. Instead of sequentially testing each of those genes, patients with a particular phenotype should be offered a targeted NGS panel. In some circumstances, it may be more appropriate to test only one gene instead of a panel of genes. In such situations, please contact the laboratory to discuss your patient.

Individuals who carry a pathogenic variant in a hereditary cancer gene have an increased risk of certain cancers compared to the general population. Cancer risks depend on the gene(s) in which the variant(s) is identified.

These individuals are eligible for increased cancer screening and/or risk reducing surgeries and therapeutic interventions. In addition, results may influence treatment plans for individuals with cancer.

Background

Gastrointestinal stromal tumors (GISTs) are uncommon tumors that arise predominantly in the stomach and small intestine. GISTs account for 0.1%-3.0% of gastrointestinal malignant tumors with a mean age of diagnosis of 60 years. GISTs may also be benign. Features suggestive of a hereditary GIST cancer predisposition include:

- Multiple tumors
- Hyperpigmented patches of skin in various areas
- Hyperplasia of other cells in the gastrointestinal tract
- Relatives affected with the above spanning multiple generations

The syndromes represented on this panel are inherited in an autosomal dominant manner. The actual risk to develop gland dysfunction or an endocrine tumour is dependent upon the gene involved and the penetrance.

Associated Disorders

Some of the genes on this panel are associated with other rare disorders including:

***KIT*-related hematopoietic neoplasms** such as core binding factor acute myeloid leukemia

Piebaldism is an autosomal dominant disorder characterized by patches of skin and hair that entirely lack pigment. It is caused by pathogenic variants in *KIT*.

Mitochondrial complex deficiencies are rare autosomal recessive conditions with highly variable phenotypes. Pathogenic variants have been reported in *SDHA*, *SDHB*, and *SDHD*.

If a pathogenic variant is identified in one of these genes, the patient and/or their family members may be at increased risk for specific cancers or other conditions. Genetic counselling is recommended for these families.



Indications for testing

Patients with a personal and/or family history suggestive of a predisposition to gastrointestinal stromal tumours are eligible for testing.

Ordering privileges

This panel may be ordered by Clinical Geneticists.

GIST NGS panel

The genes included in this panel may be associated with a spectrum of cancer types or a well-described hereditary cancer condition. The associated cancer risks depend on the gene in which the variant is identified.

| Gene(s) | Associated cancers and/or clinical features | Associated Hereditary Syndrome |
|--|--|--|
| <i>SDHA</i> , <i>SDHB</i> , <i>SDHC</i> , <i>SDHD</i> | Head and neck paragangliomas, extra-adrenal paragangliomas and/or pheochromocytomas, GISTs and renal clear cell carcinoma (rare) | Hereditary paraganglioma/pheochromocytoma syndrome |
| <i>PRKAR1A</i> | Skin pigment abnormalities, myxomas, endocrine tumours, schwannomas, GISTs | Carney complex |
| <i>KIT</i> | GISTs, acute myeloid leukemia, seminomas, mastocytosis | N/A |

How do I order an NGS panel?

Discuss the advantages and limitations of testing with your patient (see above). If your patient consents to the testing:

1. Complete the Molecular Genetics Laboratory Cancer and Endocrine Next Generation Sequencing Requisition (available at [Genetics and Genomics](#)) providing all relevant clinical and family history information. **Incomplete requisitions will not be accepted and will result in test delays.**
2. Provide the fully completed requisition to your patient and **direct them to their local collection lab for a blood draw.**
3. For patients without a valid Alberta PHN, please contact the laboratory genetic counsellor to discuss test availability, billing and sample requirements.

My patient has a family history of a known pathogenic variant. Is an NGS panel the appropriate test for my patient?

No. Once a pathogenic variant has been identified in the family it is best to begin testing by looking for the variant that has already been identified in the family.

Methods

Genomic DNA is sequenced on an NGS instrument. Analysis includes the coding region of the gene, including 15bp of intronic/coding boundaries. If a clinically relevant variant does not meet the validation requirements it is confirmed by Sanger sequencing. Additional deletion/duplication testing may be performed by a variety of methods, including, but not limited to: comparative genomic hybridization, NGS-based dosage analysis, multiplex ligation-dependent probe amplification, and quantitative PCR. Confirmation by a secondary method is carried out when necessary. The methods used to generate results are identified on each patient report.

Test Performance

NGS detects nucleotide substitutions, small insertions and deletions and copy number variants. This test is expected to detect >95% of variants in the coding regions of the tested genes.

When can I expect results?

Results may take up to 4 months.



Can testing be expedited to facilitate medical management of a patient?

Expedited testing (~1 month from the time the sample is received) is available if required for immediate surgical or therapeutic management. Please provide details on the requisition form regarding the reason for expedited testing as well as a target date for results.

How are results reported?

Results are sent to the ordering provider. For some tests, results will not be sent to 'copy to' physicians by the laboratory, but may be obtained by contacting the ordering health care provider.

What Types of Results Can I Expect?

| Type of NGS result | Interpretation |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Pathogenic Variant | A variant has been identified that is disease causing. |
| Likely Pathogenic Variant | A variant has been identified and there is significant but not conclusive evidence that the variant is disease causing. |
| Variant of Uncertain Significance | A variant has been identified and there is not sufficient evidence to classify the variant as pathogenic/likely pathogenic or benign |
| No Pathogenic Variant (Uninformative) | No variants of clinical or uncertain significance were detected. This is an uninformative result and no explanation has been identified for the patient's phenotype. There may be other genes or variants not assessed by the current NGS panel associated with the patient's phenotype. A genetic condition or genetic component to the phenotype has not be excluded. |

NOTE: Benign, or likely benign variants (variants known not to be disease causing) are not reported.

My patient has a variant. What are the next steps?

Your patient should be managed based on their diagnosis and clinical presentation. If your patient has a pathogenic variant or a likely pathogenic variant, genetic counselling may be indicated to discuss the implications for other family members. If your patient has a variant of uncertain significance, a referral to Clinical Genetics may aid in the assessment of the variant.

My patient's results are uninformative. What are the next steps?

A referral to Clinical Genetics may still be appropriate for your patient if they have a significant family history suggestive of hereditary cancer and/or desire additional counselling regarding their results.

Contact Information

Health care providers can contact the Calgary Laboratory Genetic Counsellors at 403-955-3097.

Requisition forms, contact information and other resources can be found at:
[Genetics and Genomics](#)

References

Adam MP, Ardinger HH, Pagon RA, et al., editors. GeneReviews® [Internet]. Seattle (WA): University of Washington, Seattle; 1993-2018 [cited 2017 Dec]. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK11116/>

National Library of Medicine (US). Genetics Home Reference [Internet]. Bethesda (MD): The Library; 1993-2018 [cited 2017 Dec]. Available from: <https://ghr.nlm.nih.gov/>