

Postmortem Genetic Testing

INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES

What is postmortem genetic testing?	A genetic test is performed on the DNA of someone who has died. It is a tool that may help to identify the cause of death, particularly when the death was sudden or unexplained.
How can postmortem genetic testing help?	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. <u>Learn cause of death</u>: For cases of sudden unexplained death before age 40, genetic testing may provide a cause of death up to 35% of the time.2. <u>Protect family members</u>: If the test finds the cause of death, this can impact medical recommendations for at-risk family members. Then, family members can choose to have genetic testing to see if they inherited the same risk of sudden death, and receive tailored screening and medical care based on their results.
What is needed for postmortem genetic testing?	The test requires DNA, which is taken from a blood or tissue sample. The way the sample is stored affects the quality of the DNA and the ability to perform the test.
How can I start the genetic testing process?	<p>If the person who passed away was eligible for care in the U.S. Military Health System or had a history of active duty military service, our team may be able to coordinate genetic testing and interpretation free of charge. Contact us to verify eligibility and with questions. We will need a copy of the autopsy report.</p> <p>If genetic testing is pursued, our team will help with logistics, communication, and coordination of genetic testing. Please contact: MiCAP.genetics@usuhs.edu</p>