| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | muscle biopsy, urine, stool, CSF | prenatal neural tube or ventral wall defect | |
| | | | Maternal serum $\alpha$-fetoprotein levels screen for neural tube and ventral wall defects |

*CSF*, Cerebrospinal fluid; *DNA*, deoxyribonucleic acid.

Nurses frequently encounter children with genetic diseases and families in which there is a risk that a disorder may be transmitted to or occur in an offspring. It is a responsibility of nurses to be alert to situations in which persons could benefit from a genetic evaluation and counseling (see Nursing Care Guidelines box), to be aware of the local genetic resources, to aid families in finding services, and to offer support and care for children and families affected by genetic conditions. Local genetic clinics can be located through several sites; for example, GeneTests,* a publicly funded medical genetics information resource developed for physicians and other health care providers, is available at no cost to all interested persons. Another resource is the National Society of Genetic Counselors,† which lists genetic counselors by states in the United States.

## Nursing Care Guidelines

### Common Indications for Referral

Previous child with multiple congenital anomalies; cognitive impairment; or an isolated birth defect, such as neural tube defect, cleft lip, or cleft palate

Family history of a hereditary condition, such as cystic fibrosis, fragile X syndrome, or diabetes

Prenatal diagnosis of advanced maternal age or other indication

Consanguinity

Teratogen exposure, such as to occupational chemicals, medications, or alcohol