



# Be a GIST Detective

Uncover the Importance of Biomarker Testing

In detective work, there are several important questions that allow someone to uncover evidence and to see the whole picture. Sharing the **Who, What, When, Where, Why** and **How** of biomarker/mutational testing with your doctor will help you advocate to obtain the testing you need for an accurate diagnosis and targeted treatment.



**Who should obtain testing?** Any patient diagnosed with Gastrointestinal Stromal Tumor should receive basic biomarker/mutational testing. GIST is not one cancer but a sarcoma with many rare subsets. To receive the most effective treatment for your mutation, you need to know as much information as possible.



**What is biomarker testing?** Biomarker testing goes beyond diagnosing GIST. The neoplastic tissue of your tumor will be analyzed to identify mutations, genetic alterations, proteins and other details. DNA alterations or changes in cancer cells can illustrate tumor behavior and growth patterns which can determine what treatment might be used. In some cases, genetic testing may be advised to see if your GIST is inheritable.



**When should testing be done?** It is important to have testing done at the beginning of the diagnostic process, or at any point where resistance to treatment and progression is identified.



**Where can I obtain testing?** In the United States, most large academic medical centers can perform biomarker testing. There are private labs that perform more sophisticated tests such as next generation sequencing. Internationally, access varies. The Life Raft Group can help you locate these services.



**Why should I have testing?** It is critical to know the driving force behind an individual's GIST tumor. This knowledge helps ensure an accurate diagnosis to identify personalized treatment to avoid ineffective interventions that cost patients time, money and needless side effects.



**How can I get tested?** When speaking with your doctor, have all relevant documentation with you - pathology reports, imaging results, etc. and bring this sheet for discussion about what type of testing is best for you.

The LRG can help you navigate this process, from diagnosis to testing to treatments.

Please contact: [patientregistrydepartment@liferaftgroup.org](mailto:patientregistrydepartment@liferaftgroup.org)

For more information on biomarker testing, go to: <https://liferaftgroup.org/mutations-in-gist/>