How have I or my child got this condition?

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Wilson's disease is a genetic disorder. This means that it is not brought about by anything that may have occurred during pregnancy, neither is it an infectious or contagious disease. Genetic disorders are inherited and the pattern in which you or your child may have developed the condition will now be described.

Every person carries more than 30000 genes, amongst which there is an estimated defect in approximately seven genes. If by accident you and your partner both carry the same genetic defect (in this case for Wilson's disease), with each pregnancy, there is a one in four chance that your baby will be born with Wilson's disease. If the gene is inherited from both mum and dad, like in Wilson's disease, it is described as being "autosomal recessive".

The risk of being affected is the same for both girls and boys. The frequency of Wilson's disease is very low: 1 out of 30000 to 50000 births.