Genetic Considerations

When conducting a health assessment interview and physical assessment, it is important for the nurse to consider genetic influences on health of the adult. During the health assessment interview, ask about family members with inflammatory bowel disorders, celiac disease, colon polyps, and/or colon cancer. During the physical assessment, assess for any manifestations that might indicate a genetic disorder (see page 746 for genetic considerations). If data are found to indicate genetic risk factors or alterations, ask about genetic testing and refer for appropriate genetic counseling and evaluation. Chapter 8 provides further information about genetics in medical-surgical nursing.

Health Assessment Interview

A health assessment interview to determine problems with bowel structure and function may be conducted during a health screening, may focus on a chief complaint (such as abdominal pain or change in bowel patterns), or may be part of a total health assessment. The assessment of bowel sounds is a common part of routine assessments. Clients may feel embarrassed to talk about bowel elimination patterns. To promote effective rapport, ask about less personal information first.