

health spotlight

Genetic Testing for Truly Individualized Health Care

By Laura Kovalcik, D.O.

Many today are seeking more natural solutions for staying healthy or to help with a chronic health condition. For some, prescription medications might cause reactions or dysfunction, surgery may not be an option, or they prefer less invasive, more natural approaches.

We hear a lot about individualized treatment and programs, while we also hear “everyone is unique.” How can patients and their physicians truly find a path using the right therapies for each individual? One tool in the medical tool box becoming more actively used in the past several years is genetic testing.

Sometimes, during cell replication to create new cells for our bodies, mistakes are made. By changing just one letter or just one base in the DNA, the gene now has a totally new meaning and function. These variations are called single nucleotide polymorphisms or SNPs.

These small variations in DNA are expressed in many ways. They can influence how you metabolize food and what types of exercise are best for you. Testing can identify your own unique gene variations, and recommend customized lifestyle approaches to help maximize your genetic potential – promoting optimal health never before achieved.

One genetic testing program covers testing for over 48 genes and multiple areas of health such as brain, heart, mental, weight, blood and nutrition.

The test is collected by your physician via a cheek swab. In addition to the genes, it will include a report with recommendations based on the data you provide with

your physician on your diet, lifestyle, exercise, sleep patterns and emotional health habits.

This information is sent for processing and in 6-10 weeks your personalized report is ready. You and your physician will review the results and make a plan to move forward with the positives. So, if you do test positive for any gene SNPs, there are often positive things you can do to avoid the “expression” of that SNP.

Although you may have seen other genetic testing programs advertised, this one is more health-focused. By following the recommendations in your report, you, with your physician's help, can take the lead toward achieving a healthier life. Also good to know – your information is kept confidential and not sold to other companies.

Genetic testing is typically not covered by insurance. Prices can vary widely. But if you are concerned about how to achieve your best health, getting your genetic profile documented can be a game changer, focusing you on known actions to minimize disease and maximize functionality.

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