Healthy You: Quick Facts

Genetic testing: Is it right for you?

Have you ever wondered why health care providers ask so many questions about your family? They might ask if any of your relatives had heart disease or diabetes, for example. They aren't being nosy. Your genes, which you share with family, hold clues to your health. Learning more about your genes can help you make better decisions about your health.

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Quick facts on genetic tests:

1 You inherit your genes from your parents. Genes have a say in many things, such as your hair color, food choices and your risk for developing health problems over a lifetime.

2 If you have a family history of certain diseases or conditions, you should talk with your health care team. They can tell you if genetic testing makes sense for you.

3 Genetic tests are usually done in a lab using a sample of your saliva or blood. They can help you and your doctor come up with a prevention or treatment plan to help you stay healthy.

4 Prior to your test, you will be counseled about the risks, benefits and limits of testing. That's because the information you learn from your test can impact your life.

5 If genetic testing is recommended by your doctor, health insurance plans may cover part or all of the costs. Check with your insurer before taking your test to prevent unexpected charges.

APHA

>> For more on genetic diseases, visit www.genome.gov

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