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By Dr. Cynthia Crosser

FUNCTIONAL MEDICINE: Should I Run My “23andMe” Genetic Testing?

We are in a major healthcare revolution and our genetic makeup is a very exciting part of this. The burgeoning field of genomics is helping us to modify our lifestyle, diets, and environments to ward off Alzheimer’s, cancer, and heart disease. When embarking on your health journey be aware that YOUR DNA IS NOT YOUR DESTINY! Aside from rare single-cell diseases such as Cystic Fibrosis, most diseases are multifactorial and the expression of genes is a clear reflection of your diet, lifestyle, and environment. Type 2 Diabetes, arthritis, heart disease, and cancer are such examples where the genetic potential is there but is not deterministic. Your choices can often override genetic predisposition. Even those with BRCA1 mutations aren’t guaranteed a diagnosis of breast cancer.

Genes are also modified by other genes. A good example of this is the person who smokes cigarettes or eats charred meat. They may make the enzyme CYP1A2 more active, thus making them a fast metabolizer of caffeine.

Who will interpret your results? Genomics is a complex field and it is best to have a trained practitioner read your results and make recommendations. Even if you have a biomedical consultant interpret your results, they cannot address your specific situation—such as family history, or environmental factors. Even genetic counselors are not healthcare providers and cannot help with diagnosis or treatment. A credentialed doctor is still necessary for recommendations.

Functional medicine practitioners seek to treat the root causes of disease instead of just symptoms. I might use genetic testing to uncover biochemical imbalances or

weaknesses in detoxification mechanisms which can predispose someone to disease. A functional medicine practitioner would recommend you increase certain nutrients because you have a SNP (single nucleotide polymorphism) associated with cardiovascular risk.

Some people want the information from their testing so they can become proactive about preventing chronic disease such as heart disease. Others become very anxious about getting their genome analysis. It is best to be honest with your doctor about your intentions for best using the data.

The practical applications of using this genetic information are profound for functional medicine practitioners. For example, the patient that is hypothyroid and yet has the SNP for poor Vitamin D and/or A utilization. If they also have intestinal permeability, we know that we must address the unhealthy gut first and then provide nutrients to assist the thyroid function. We find that many signs and symptoms are related to potential deficiencies based on their genome. This can direct us to utilize specific bloodwork testing that in many instances are not usually ordered. Putting together the pieces of the puzzle, utilizing the genetics, the health history, lifestyle habits, bloodwork, and even hormone panels, help the functional medicine doctor know dietary and supplement recommendations and even how to monitor to assess the results of your treatments and modifications. This is all done in an effort to live life with vitality and greatly reduce the chances of chronic disease!

For more information call Dr. Crosser at 302-994-1010. Let’s Get Healthy!

TESTIMONIAL

“Dr. Crosser is amazing. I HIGHLY recommend Dr. Crosser! She has been my chiropractor for at least 15 years. I had disc surgery 21 years ago, which took care of the immediate problem, but I continued to have back issues. I went through a couple rounds of physical therapy and also saw a different chiropractor, but none of that had a lasting impact. I saw Dr. Crosser’s ad in the phone book and decided to see if she could help. She did a thorough exam

to determine what was wrong and devised a treatment plan. I stuck with it and saw definite results. I’ve been a loyal patient ever since then! What keeps me going back is that she continues to make me feel better, and the fact that she genuinely cares about her patients on a personal level. When I’m with her, she makes me feel like I’m her only patient. I know that some of her patients only make an appointment when they’re in pain. I’ve found that it works better for me to see her regularly so she can fix issues before they become major problems. Her treatments have improved my quality of life.”
- Lauren H.



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