

Should I consider a 23andMe genetic test?

Direct-to-consumer DNA testing such as ones offered by 23andMe and other companies has surged recently in popularity, due to its enticing potential benefits, widespread availability, and low cost. You can now buy kits off the Internet for as little as \$59. These tests are even available for purchase at Amazon.com and at your local Walmart. But before jumping on the bandwagon, you should be aware of some of the potential consequences of testing.

These over-the-counter genetic tests can give you fun and interesting information about your ancestry and health status. They can potentially find some more relatives for you around the world. You can even affirm why a child or even a cousin looks so much like you, based on DNA matching information. By turning on a sharing-information feature, you can also see DNA similarities and differences with your family members and friends.

A relative-finding option can help you find possible relatives around the world. This optional feature will even allow you to contact others around the world who desire to be contacted based on their genetic information. Finding ancestral roots may provide closure for people seeking answers about biological links or migration of ancestors, or even forced migration events during more tumultuous times.

However, when multiple family members upload their genetic data, there can be a chance for some dramatic and unexpected results, where a biologic relationship does not match the expected or legal genealogy. The overall rate of this is about 1% in large DNA databases, AND are mostly attributed to instances where the EXPECTED father is not the BIOLOGICAL father. A result of this type can disrupt or complicate family relationships and may even have legal or financial implications. Again, this possibility will only come up if multiple family members upload their DNA information and use the compare option.

When your DNA information is stored on a database, the company holding this information may be required to disclose this information, in certain legal proceedings by court orders or subpoenas. In fact, several high-profile murder cases, previously unsolved for decades, have been solved through DNA matching technology. Although the individual submitting the over-the-counter genetic test may not be the suspect or criminal, the genetic information on the database can be used to trace a relative who may have committed the crime.

Also be aware that some companies can share your anonymized genetic information with pharmaceutical companies. Please be sure to read the fine print, and if you like, opt out of information-sharing with non-governmental or law-enforcement agencies.

Insurance companies will not automatically receive your genetic information from these direct-to-consumer tests. Furthermore, health insurance companies are banned from denying health insurance coverage or increasing your rates based on genetic information. However, life insurance and disability insurance

companies have a loophole under current law and can use genetic information for these purposes, if you sign a consent to release information to them. Employers or potential employers may not use genetic information to make hiring and firing decisions.

Finally, the health and predictive medical information derived from these over-the-counter genetic tests may not be definitive. For instance, studies have shown that the BRCA genetic testing for breast and ovarian cancer risk provided by the over-the-counter tests do not cover for all possible BRCA mutation types. Therefore, a negative BRCA test from an over-the-counter company may give you false reassurance, when in reality you may still have a less common mutation that can only be detected by testing through a larger reference lab. Conversely, a positive test result for a genetic mutation may have many unknowns about future health implications when there is incomplete or ongoing scientific research on that mutation. This example of a positive result could lead to unnecessary worrying.

Genetic information related to health risks is best discussed with a professional genetic counselor, trained to answer specific questions on your DNA results, trace health conditions in your family tree and give health advice relevant to you and your relatives. Your personal physician will be happy to refer to a genetic counselor if that need arises.

CDC Advice

With the ever-changing information on COVID-19 infection rates, vaccination trends and emerging COVID-19 virus variants, please visit the CDC website to stay on top of the latest developments.

You will find resources there for many common questions, including how to adjust your family, social and work lives after getting fully vaccinated (and for some after COVID-19 recovery).

Administrative update:

We have updated our practice website and patient retainer portal. Please check us out at www.ntphp.com.

NTPHP is also pleased to announce the upcoming addition of two new physicians to our practice. Kyle Gummelt, DO will join our Park Cities location and Manik Aggarwal, MD will join our Dallas location, both on July 1, 2021. We look forward to introducing you to them!

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8215 Westchester Drive
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Dallas, Texas 75225
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Las Colinas Office
440 West I-635
Suite 405
Irving, Texas 75063
972-993-5080

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Frisco, Texas 75034
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HEALTHY HABITS

Sausage and Sweet Potato Breakfast Casserole

Check out this healthy family-friendly breakfast to create a routine of having breakfast together.

From: The Defined Dish

Serves: 6 people

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. ground turkey or pork breakfast sausage
- 2 cups diced or spiralized sweet potato
- 10 eggs
- 1 tsp kosher salt
- 1/2 tsp black pepper
- 3/4 cup 2% Fairlife Milk (to make this dairy free you can also use Nutpods Original Dairy-free creamer)
- 1/4 cup shredded Mexican blend cheese (optional, omit for Dairy-free option)

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees and spray a 9x13 baking dish with non-stick cooking spray.

Heat a large skillet over medium heat. Add the breakfast sausage (if it's in the casing, remove from casing first) and cook, breaking up the meat with the back of a spoon until cooked thoroughly, for ~8 minutes. Remove from heat and set aside.

In a large bowl, whisk together the eggs, salt, pepper and milk until very well combined and frothy.

Spread the sweet potatoes across the bottom of the baking dish. Next, spread the cooked sausage. Then pour the egg mixture over the top. Finally, sprinkle the cheese over the top (if using).

Place into the oven and cook until the eggs have just set (usually about 20 minutes) and enjoy!

Optional: Serve with sliced avocado and fresh fruit