

The Next Wave Genetic Testing

By Dr. R. Pletsch



I know many people who their physician asks and sometimes suggests they do genetic testing. Several asked me if it was worth it. Most of the articles I read are above my understanding. But in the October, 2026 Newsmax Vera Tweed published an article that seems to explain it.

If you are looking to understand more of your family history, that is fine. If you think it will predict the future, it's not that simple. Tweed lets us know that Huntington's disease, Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, and Sickle Cell are heavily linked to heredity. Other tests are given for diseases that can only estimate the risk you have. Dr. Brendish, Director of Genetic Counseling at Arizona State University, writes that you should decide why you want the test and how the results will be interpreted.. She suggests you visit a genetic counselor.

Some of these tests are available over the counter for you to do at home with just saliva.

I know several people who refused the tests and for these the number one reason was that at their age they are not going to have any more children, so why worry about it. Second reason is that my family and I already worry too much and the tests will never rule out these terrible diseases that might possibly come to our future. Still some others have said if I do it I'll wait until the tests are even better.

Many of the people that are considering the tests worry about Alzheimers. The present test looks for the gene APOE. It does not tell you much except if your gene has that trait, 30 - 55% will develop the disease, but 45 - 70% will not get it. These figures seem odd but that's what the research says.

Many of us know people who are going through or who have had breast cancer. There are two genes that are part of the study. They are BRCA1 and BRCA2. Under normal circumstances, these genes help prevent other genes from mutating. If they find that these cells have mutated, it does not mean that you will definitely get the cancer, but they will have to watch you more closely, such as more mammograms.

The National Society of Genetic Counselors suggest checking with specialists so that they can keep you with current research and try to relieve your anxiety. Some very old studies could contradict the information available now. Artificial Intelligence, AI, is mentioned in several medical journals saying it could greatly help researchers. AI would allow collecting more data from more sources and may even subdivide some of the groups they now have.

These doctors believe that genetic testing can help but is not the answer to all our prayers. It can tell you the likelihood of you getting this or that cancer but there still is the unknown for example George Burns who drank and smoked lived to 100. Then you hear about a young person that was in the Olympics dying young due to cancer. These physicians all believe live a healthy lifestyle and get your checkups.