



Wellbeing

Living a Better, More Vibrant Life

Insights



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DNA Testing Considerations

Sales for at-home genetic testing kits have exploded in recent years. Perhaps you already purchased one for yourself or are among the one-third of Americans considering sending in your saliva sample for analysis. According to a report by MIT Technology Review, more than 26 million people have had their DNA tested. Genetic testing kits are also trending as popular birthday and holiday gifts.

DNA-based tests aim to shed light on your ancestry and various health factors and are widely available, with most requiring only a small saliva sample. Popular at-home kits range in price from \$80 to \$200 and include an analysis of genetic markers, such as those that show your ancestry composition, sensitivity to

foods, susceptibility to illnesses you might develop or pass on to children, and risk for certain types of cancers or health issues like blood clotting.

While many people are curious about what their DNA footprint can tell them about their roots or predisposition for health conditions, there are important things to consider before taking such tests. Some of the information you obtain may be amusing and other results may be actionable, but there is also the possibility that the experience may produce angst. Here are two scenarios:

- A test for the common variants linked to hereditary thrombophilia, which could put a person at slightly higher



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risk for blood clots, may provide actionable information. If your test is positive, you can share it with your physician so that you can take precautions should you have to undergo major surgery, discuss increased risks of taking oral contraceptives and be more mindful of the effects of lifestyle factors, such as prolonged immobility and obesity that also increase risks of clotting.

- Tests that look at the variants for colorectal or ovarian cancers may cause a person to feel anxious, especially if it's emotionally difficult to put positive test results in perspective. A kit may test for two or three variants, but having a risk variant does not mean you will develop the condition. On the other hand, negative test results may give people a false sense of security. In reality, there may be 100 to over 1,000 variants in certain genes known to increase cancer risk. Furthermore, most cases of ovarian and colorectal cancers are not caused by inherited variants, so women and men without a variant may still be at risk of developing these cancers.

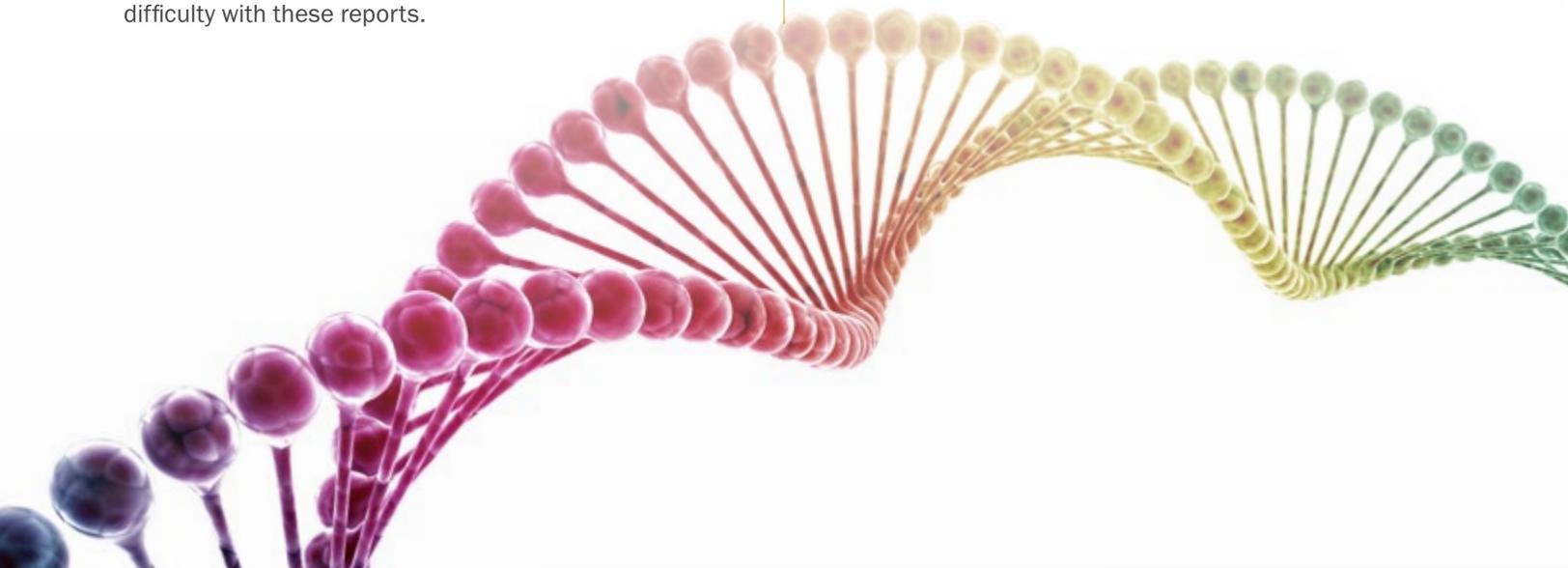
In general, test kits offer fairly easy-to-digest and engaging reports prefaced with cautionary language about learning of DNA relatives you didn't know existed (as you can opt to have the information shared in a common database) and strong recommendations to share concerning health-related results with a medical professional or genetic counselor. Here are examples of such warnings to help you decide if testing is right for you:

- Some of the reports are about serious diseases that may not currently have an effective treatment or cure. Others may have effective treatment or prevention options, but these actions may carry their own health risks.
- If you tend to feel anxious or have ever been diagnosed with anxiety or depression, you may have more emotional difficulty with these reports.

- Having a risk variant does not mean that you will definitely develop the condition. If you receive a "variant not detected" result, you could still have a genetic variant not included in the test.
- These tests do not diagnose cancer or any other health conditions and are not substitutes for visits to a health care professional for recommended screenings.
- Genetic testing for conditions such as Alzheimer's in the general population is not currently recommended by any health care professional organizations and is discouraged by patient advocacy groups.

One other consideration is the privacy of your genetic information and how it is used and shared with others. While legitimate genetic testing companies will often note that they will not sell your information to third parties or share it with researchers without the individual's consent, it is good practice to review the genetic testing company's privacy policies to weigh the benefits and risks of providing your genetic data.

Ultimately you have to weigh the pros and cons of taking a genetic test. It can be fun to dig into a little slice of who you are and where your ancestors came from and share that information with family and close friends. Perhaps it will help you feel more connected to and knowledgeable about your roots around the globe. In conjunction with your physician, it might also be helpful in family planning efforts. Regardless of the results, the experience may lead you to take inventory of your habits and create goals to improve your lifestyle. That all said, it's not for everyone, nor is it a decision to take lightly. Genetics are only one piece of the puzzle of our health. If you're feeling unsure, talk to your doctor in advance of taking such a test.



On the Menu

Sourdough Bread

During the pandemic, one of the most popular activities seemed to be baking, especially breads. Sourdough ranked highest among new breads attempted during this time. This is most likely due to the time it takes to create a sourdough starter – up to a week for the full fermentation process! However, while some choose to make their own starter, you can also purchase one. Or just head to your local bakery to snag a fresh loaf and skip the baking altogether. It's a crowd favorite that's known for its tangy flavor, chewy texture and crisp, crackly crust.

Bread can get a bit of a bad rap for being unhealthy, but that really isn't true, especially in moderation. Sourdough is specifically one of the more desirable breads from a health perspective because it is slow-fermented. It's unique because it doesn't require commercial yeast to rise. Instead, it's made with a live fermented culture, known as a sourdough starter, which acts as a natural leavening agent.

From a health standpoint, it dominates when compared to other breads. The naturally occurring acids and long fermentation help break down the gluten, making it easier for the body to absorb. In addition, sourdough bread is a good source of the following:

- **Iron** – Essential part of red blood cell production and energy metabolism
- **Selenium** – Supports the immune system, cells and tissue
- **B Vitamins** – Assists in proper nervous system function and helps regulate metabolism
- **Prebiotics** – Makes it easier to digest than many other breads

Keep It Fresh

For maximum freshness, plan to eat fresh sourdough bread within 4 to 5 days of baking. But the sooner you enjoy it, the better. Ideally, store your loaf in a cotton bread bag or wrapped in a large tea towel so that the bread can 'breathe.' Keep it in a relatively cool place so it can maintain normal moisture levels. Storing bread in the fridge is not recommended as it is an extremely dry environment and can harden the loaf quickly.

Plastic bags are also not ideal, particularly in warm locations, as the bag may cause 'sweating.' Moisture and warmth can encourage bacteria. For longer term storage, place cling-wrapped bread in the freezer for up to three months.

Avocado Sourdough Toast

Avocado and sourdough make the perfect toast combination for a filling breakfast or even a hearty snack! With so many toppings and additions, it's easy to whip up a new toast each day.

Ingredients:

- 1 (1 oz.) slice of sourdough bread, toasted
- ½ small avocado
- ½ tsp. fresh lemon juice
- ½ tsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- ⅛ tsp. salt
- ⅛ tsp. freshly ground black pepper

Toppings: sea salt flakes, red pepper flakes

Optional toppings: poached egg, sprouts, sliced tomatoes, balsamic vinegar, caramelized onions, smoked salmon, bacon and so much more!

Directions:

In a small bowl, combine avocado, lemon juice, salt and pepper. Gently mash the ingredients with the back of a fork. Top toasted bread with mashed avocado mixture. Drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with desired toppings and optional ingredients. Serve immediately.

Adapted from CookingLight.com

Nutrition Info

Per serving

Calories	200
Total Fat	13g
Carbohydrates	18g
Fiber	5g
Sugar	2g
Protein	5g

Ask the Experts

Get to know the CBIZ Engagement & Wellbeing Consulting team as we ask our experts about their personal journey to living a vibrant life. This month we sat down with Janet Melton, Natalie Magee, Rachel Cable and Christine Maurer. Check out what they had to say.



Janet Melton, Wellbeing Specialist,
Known on our team as *The Good Citizen*:
Principled, Prepared, Conscientious



Rachel Cable, Wellbeing Specialist,
Known on our team as *The Ace*:
Decisive, Tireless, Forthright



Natalie Magee, Wellbeing Specialist,
Known on our team as *The Coordinator*:
Organized, Practical, Constructive



Christine Maurer, Wellbeing Specialist,
Known on our team as *The Good Citizen*:
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1. Research suggests we are happy and fulfilled when we are able to apply our strengths to our work to find purpose and meaning. How do you bring your unique strengths to work each day?

Janet: I enjoy connecting with people and building trusting relationships. As a registered dietitian and wellbeing specialist, I get to incorporate this into my interactions with employees to build a level of comfort and trust, which is important as they look to me to provide trustworthy resources as part of the program. I enjoy bringing what I've learned in my one-on-one relationships to my role as a coordinator to create and

communicate programs that focus on total wellbeing.

Rachel: I'm very organized and always have a to-do list to stay on track with what needs to get done. Staying organized helps me bring my best self to work every day. I like to be proactive and creative with planning to offer new and innovative wellbeing approaches to my clients.

Natalie: I love to coordinate; I'm the friend who plans a girl's weekend or family vacation. I'm also considerate and very detail-oriented. I take lots of time to research and ask questions so that everyone will be happy and comfortable. I love being a wellbeing coordinator because I get to use these skills every day to help others live their best life by planning great wellbeing programs.

2. Mental and emotional health have come to the forefront of wellbeing concerns. Any lessons learned or coping mechanisms you've developed that you will use in post-pandemic life?

Christine: I wake up at least an hour and a half before my kids. I need that time to work out, meditate, get mentally prepared for my day and have that very important cup of coffee. This way I'm more prepared to handle the chaos that awaits me. I also enjoy including my kids in self-care sometimes; they

exercise with me, help me meal prep and occasionally they will give me a facial.

Janet: I'm a joiner so most ideas that cross my path sound amazing and I'm usually the first one to sign up. This unfortunately leads to a lot of overscheduling. The pandemic forced us all to slow down, and I enjoyed the slower pace more than I expected. Moving forward, I hope to be more thoughtful with my commitments and continue the trend of not overscheduling myself as opportunities start to open back up.



Rachel: I've learned to focus on the things that make me happy. There can be so much negativity in the world, and it is important to find ways to tune it out so you don't let it bring you down. For me it's spending time with my husband, finding ways to stay active, shopping with my sister and mom, or getting together with friends.



3. Technology is both a great connecter and a powerful divider. What do you do to ensure that your social media habits serve to improve your overall wellbeing versus deplete it?

Christine: I limit my time on social media to a few minutes in the morning and at night, and I try not to have my phone with me when I have one-on-one time with my kids. I found that I was distracted by my phone and not focusing on them. If I'm giving my kids my undivided attention, then they are more understanding when I do occasionally need to be on my phone.



Janet: I try to surround myself with positive people, so I choose my social media "friends" wisely. While I think it is important to have an open mind to views that differ from my own, I try and not take social media too seriously. I'm really just there to get some great vacation ideas, maybe learn a little DIY and hopefully see some cute puppy and baby pics!

Rachel: Social media can be a very toxic place, depending on how you choose to use the different platforms. I personally choose to avoid any

negativity and focus on accounts that bring me joy – whether it be fashion, home décor, recipes or skincare.

Natalie: I read an article online when I was a new mom that talked about leaving your phone in the car when you go to pick up your child so that you're present in the moment. It seems simple, but I've practiced this with both of my children and pick-up times are now one of my favorite times of day. Finding a time each day to log off, whether it be mealtime or 30 minutes before bed, is a great way to reset and be present.

4. Tracking in one form or another has been a trending wellbeing recommendation for several years. Do you use any apps or other methods of tracking/journaling to keep tabs on your wellbeing?

Christine: I've been using the [Stridekick](#) app for a step challenge my sisters and I are doing. It's a great way to challenge each other and take our fitness to another level. The app lists the total steps per day and the total for the challenge. It also includes a chat feature to help everyone stay motivated.

Janet: Last year I received an [Instant Happy Journal](#) by Karen Salmansohn that has daily prompts for journaling "365 days of inspiration, gratitude and joy." This has been a wonderful journal to have (especially through the pandemic) that has really helped me focus on the positives versus the



negatives in my life and the world. I've done some gratitude journaling in the past, but the prompts in this book really made me think outside the box.

Natalie: I've used [MyFitnessPal.com](#) since I was in college (before apps were a thing). It's a free calorie-counting app that gives you a detailed log of your nutrients and fitness in one. I'm an emotional eater and utilizing MyFitnessPal is a way to hold myself accountable for what I'm putting into my body. I love their online community that serves as an engagement and support group, as well as the hundreds of healthy recipes they share.

5. What is your #1 piece of advice for optimal wellbeing?

Christine: Keep coming back to the positive. I try to start the morning by getting my kids excited for their day. I not only want to have a good day, but I want everyone around me to as well. When I focus on the good, I'm not as rattled by the speed bumps that come along in my day.

Rachel: Balance. It is my belief that balance is key to optimal wellbeing. I think it's important to engage in activities, people, places and even food that bring you joy, but also make sure you're fueling your body with the healthy things it needs like exercise and nutrients.

Natalie: Find the people who build you up and surround yourself with them. Having a support system that encourages and motivates you in all areas of life is so important. Know that everyone who comes into your life won't stay, but the people who make you feel whole are worth keeping around.



Cultivating Good Sleep Habits for Children

Sleep is essential for your child's mental and physical health. Many studies have shown that kids who regularly get an adequate amount of sleep have improved attention, behavior, learning and memory; stronger immune systems; and better overall mental and physical health. But if you're finding it impossible to help your child sleep, you're not alone. The American Academy of Pediatrics estimates that sleep problems affect 25 to 50% of children and 40% of adolescents. Not getting enough sleep can lead to high blood pressure, obesity, depression and a weakened immune system.

Understanding your child's sleep needs is the first step toward helping improve their sleep. Through a combination of age-appropriate routines and proper nutrition, you can help your child get the rest they need to grow up strong and healthy.

As children grow, their sleep needs change. But research shows that regardless of age, a consistent bedtime routine is the biggest key to getting enough sleep. Whatever bedtime routine you establish, be consistent each night by doing the same activities in the same order. For example, a typical bedtime routine might include:

- Turn off computers, TV and video games at least one hour before bedtime as blue light interferes with melatonin (sleep hormone) production. Set your teen's phone to automatically dim blue light at 8:30 p.m.
- Have a small, healthy snack 45 to 60 minutes before bed.
- Take a bath and read a book or write in a journal.
- Brush teeth and put on pajamas. Have them wear socks; research shows that having warm feet improves sleep duration.

Creating a sleep-conducive bedroom is also important for a child's sleep. Work with your child to figure out what works for them. This could mean blackout curtains (and potentially a dim nightlight), a white noise machine or other rhythmic, soothing music, and adjustments to room temperature. The National Sleep Foundation has a list of additional [sleep strategies](#).

While the practices outlined in this article are general, there are a number of variables that can impact a child's sleep. If you have concerns or specific questions about your child's sleep, talk with your child's pediatrician who may recommend treatment or other practices based on your child's health, circumstances, age, etc.

Resources: CDC, [Sleepfoundation.org](#), [American Academy of Pediatrics](#)

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Healthy habits for eating well

Overwhelmed by conflicting nutrition and diet advice? The truth is, eating healthy doesn't have to be hard – and you don't have to live on salad, buy expensive vitamins, or swear off snacking. Your own nutrition intuition can lead you in the right direction.

Eat in season

In-season fruits and veggies are at peak flavor, nutrition, and supply. Seasonal eating is typically more affordable and sustainable – and makes it easy and delicious to get more fresh produce onto your plate.

DIY

Instead of ordering in, try cooking at home. By controlling fat, sugar, and salt content, home cooks tend to eat healthier than people who eat out often – even when they're not trying to.

Expand your horizons

Healthy eating doesn't have to be boring. Experiment with herbs and spices for high-impact, low-calorie flavor. Or try nutritious twists on foods you love – like zucchini spaghetti with meatballs, or taco lettuce wraps.

Visit kp.org/foodforhealth.

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Health tip: everyday nutrition.

A person's diet is an essential component of their current and future state of wellness. Healthy eating has many benefits. Eating a healthier diet may decrease the risk of getting diabetes, increase energy levels, improve heart health and help with weight management.¹

Healthy eating tips.

Although there are countless "diets" and differing food philosophies, most will agree on some basic healthy eating habits. Some healthy eating tips include:

- Eating at regular intervals.
- Eating a variety of foods.
- Aiming for balanced meals.
- Drinking water regularly and abundantly.
- Including a lot of vegetables and moderate amounts of fruits in many colors.

A healthier diet should provide adequate nutrients, including micronutrients and macronutrients. Micronutrients include vitamins and minerals that the body requires in smaller amounts and must be acquired from one's diet. Macronutrients are large and visible to the eye and are needed in larger quantities. Macronutrients include fats, proteins and carbohydrates, and are responsible for creating energy and building up the body's cells.

The quality of the nutrients is important.

Examples of high quality carbohydrates include: Starchy vegetables such as yams, sweet potatoes, winter squash, etc. beans and legumes; and whole grains.

High quality protein sources include: grass-fed meat (sparingly), skinless poultry, wild caught fish and seafood, eggs, tofu, tempeh, cottage cheese and yogurt.

When it comes to fats, they are not created equal. Certain fats are beneficial and important to health such as olive oil, avocados, nuts and seeds, fatty fish and coconut. Other fats may be harmful to your health and should be limited. These include highly processed vegetable oils, soybean and corn oil, margarine, shortening and saturated animal fats.

CONTINUED



The importance of water.

Although not categorized as a micronutrient or macronutrient, water is vital for the body to function properly. Our bodies are made up of 50% to 60% water and states of dehydration, and even suboptimal hydration, may lead to symptoms such as fatigue, constipation, dry skin and brain fog.

A person's hydration needs vary depending on many factors; however, a good rule of thumb is to drink $\frac{1}{2}$ your body weight in ounces. For example, if you weigh 150 lbs., you should aim to consume 75 ounces of water or more each day.

Understanding portion sizes.

Eating healthier is the goal; however, the portions of healthier foods are also important, especially for weight loss and maintenance. Calorie counting may be tedious and is not an exact science. A better strategy may be to use visual representations to ensure proper portions. Examples include:

- Fist = 1 cup, use for vegetables.
- Deck of cards or computer mouse = 3 to 4 ounces, use for protein.
- Tennis ball = ½ cup, use for grains such as rice or starchy carbohydrates such as potatoes.
- Cupped handful = 1 ounce, use for nuts.
- Tip of thumb = 1 tablespoon fat, use for butter or oil.

Using smaller serving dishes may also help ensure proper portion sizes. Eating from a salad plate instead of a larger plate will help manage your portion sizes.



Another area to consider when eating healthier is to ensure you are eating a balanced diet. Load your plate with a lean protein source, a complex carbohydrate and a healthy fat source; additionally, load up on colorful fruits and veggies. When considering fruits and vegetables, more is always better. Fruits and veggies are powerful allies in maintaining health. Consumption of fruits and veggies may help to prevent cancer, decrease oxidative stress, maintain a healthy heart and promote a healthier weight.²

A healthier diet does not occur overnight. Focus on making better choices bite by bite, day by day, and you may be on your way to a healthier diet and lifestyle.



Sources:

¹ National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, Diabetes Diet, Eating, & Physical Activity, <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diabetes/overview/diet-eating-physical-activity>, accessed February 2020.

² USDA, Increased vegetable and fruit consumption during weight loss effort correlates with increased weight and fat loss, <https://nalcd.nal.usda.gov/download/56679/PDF>, assessed February 2020.

This information is for general informational purposes only and is not intended nor should be construed as medical advice. Individuals should consult an appropriate medical professional to determine what may be right for them.