

Ancestry launches DNA health service that will compete with 23andMe

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Ancestry has long appealed to people eager to learn about their family roots. Now the company known for its popular DNA kits is diving into a new area of discovery—health.

Tuesday, Ancestry launched AncestryHealth, built around two DNA-screening-based offerings that are designed to help customers determine

whether they have predispositions for certain diseases and disorders.

The basic AncestryHealth Core [service](#) promises a set of personal health and wellness reports based on the DNA samples you submit that you can share with your medical provider. These physician-ordered and -certified lab tests will use genotyping technology that may help uncover potential genetic risks related to heart disease, hereditary cancers and blood-related disorders, as well as the risks associated with carrying certain genes ([cystic fibrosis](#), Tay-Sachs or [sickle cell anemia](#)).

Oversight will be provided by Ancestry partner PWNHealth, an independent network of board-certified physicians and genetic counselors. When you get started, you'll be asked a series of questions related to your [health history](#).

The Core service costs \$149 and includes the kit for submitting your DNA. If you are an AncestryDNA member, you can add AncestryHealth Core for \$49; there's no need to submit a new DNA sample.

The second offering, AncestryHealth Plus, is a subscription service launching in early 2020, that will use a next-generation sequencing (NGS) platform to deliver far more in-depth data on an expanded set of health and wellness conditions. These include risks associated with the nervous system and connective tissues. The Plus service will initially be made available only to AncestryDNA members. It will cost \$199 with a recurring subscription fee of \$49 for six months of updates.

"Your genes don't need to be your destiny," says Ancestry CEO Margo Georgiadis. "Understanding your familial and inherited [health risks](#) can help you take action with your doctor to improve your chances of better health outcomes."

Ancestry's chief rival, 23andMe, already provides services built around

DNA and health. Ancestry has had designs on the health market for years, and in 2015, it launched an "alpha" version of a tool to help families get a better handle on their health. The service never really went very far, and it has taken this long for Ancestry to jump back in.

When it comes to DNA and health, people generally fall into three buckets: those who want to know everything, those who want to know nothing (not someone likely to follow this path in the first place) and people somewhere in the middle.

If a potential issue is discovered, customers can take advantage of genetic counseling support (webinars, FAQs and such) from PWNHealth that are included as part of both services.

Customers will maintain full consent and control over their private health data, says Marjan Champine, genetics counselor manager at Ancestry. They will have the option to supply data for research purposes, but it is entirely up to them.

If you are an active AncestryDNA member engaged in genealogy, Champine says, you'll be able to pull in the structure of your family history into a tool on the health side, but genetic health data will be not show up on the genealogy side.

Champine says there is no mechanism within the Ancestry service to share health information with family members.

"There is otherwise a partition between these two areas of the business," she says.

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