

Approach that new gene testing kit with caution

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tips:

- **Be informed.** "Some people find the results upsetting and are concerned about the [emotional impact](#) to relatives with similar genetic risk, while others feel empowered to proactively take better care of their own health. It's important to consider all impacts beforehand," said Dr. J. Wesson Ashford, chair of the medical, scientific and memory screening advisory board.
- **Consider seeing a genetic counselor.** This is an expert who can explain [genetic testing](#), [answer questions](#), interpret test results and, if necessary, refer you to other health care providers and support services.
- **Understand the difference between risk and certainty.** At-home genetic test kits only reveal the risk for developing a condition, they're not a diagnosis. For example, if results show you have genes associated with an increased risk of Alzheimer's disease, it doesn't mean you will develop Alzheimer's. And if results show no elevated risk based on the genes tested, you still may be at risk for Alzheimer's based on other genes or causes.
- **Be aware of privacy issues.** Ask questions about how the company protects customers' genetic information and whether the information is shared with other parties.

(HealthDay)—Lots of Americans will unwrap a scarf or sweater this holiday season. But a growing number will receive a gift that's potentially life-changing: an at-home genetic testing kit.

Home DNA testing yields clues to ancestry and, potentially, [genetic risk](#) for [medical conditions](#). But there are a number of things you need to know before you use one of these kits, the Alzheimer's Foundation of America says.

"Genetic testing kits are a popular gift, but the [test results](#) can have implications that last long after the holidays," Lori Frank said in a foundation news release. She's on the foundation's medical, scientific and memory screening advisory board.

"As with any health decision, consumers should have the right information before deciding to take a genetic test," Frank said.

Because genetic testing has potentially positive and negative impacts, the foundation offers some

More information: The American Academy of Family Physicians has more on [genetic testing](#).

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