

# Home DNA kits have questionable results

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Federal investigators in Washington say consumers shouldn't plunk down hundreds of dollars for do-it-yourself DNA tests.

An investigation by the Government Accountability Office concludes the results produced by such tests are medically unproven, ambiguous or both, USA Today says.

The GAO report came as the U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging kicked off a hearing Thursday into genetic tests marketed on the Internet and elsewhere.

Panel Chairman Sen. Gordon Smith, R.-Ore., says consumers should visit their doctors if they are concerned about a particular disease rather than resorting to a home DNA test.

For the study, GAO investigators bought test kits from four companies and then collected DNA samples from a 9-month-old girl and a 48-year-old man, the newspaper said.

Using the samples, they created 19 fictitious consumers and sent the tests back for analysis. The personalized information from the testing companies indicated the fictitious consumers were at risk of developing a range of conditions including cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease.

USA Today said two of the firms used the results to promote expensive dietary supplements.

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