PERSONALIZED NUTRITION

Have you ever wondered why two friends can follow the same diet and have very different results? It turns out that our genes not only determine what color our hair and eyes are but may also direct how we respond to what we eat. This is where nutrigenomics comes in.

WHAT IS NUTRIGENOMICS?

Nutrigenomics looks at what we eat in the context of our specific genetic make up to maximize health. We are now able to identify genetic variations that make us more or less likely to develop certain diseases, determine how we manage our weight and whether certain foods will help or harm our health. These variations, sometimes referred to as SNPs, help to explain why we each react differently to eating the same foods. Not all aspects of our health have been mapped to specific SNPs, but many have and understanding your profile could help you make decisions that will support your personal well-being.

HOW IS IT USED?

Health care providers (RDNs, MDs) can help you get started. Most tests can be completed with a simple cheek swab that is sent into a testing lab. The results will tell you which variants you have and what you can do with that information. For example, if you have the variant that makes you a slow caffeine metabolizer, you should limit your caffeine consumption to protect your health. If you are a fast metabolizer, more caffeine might actually be better for you. Athletes can also maximize performance through personalized nutrition recommendations based on genetic variations.

BOTTOM LINE

Nutrigenomics is an exciting and developing area of personalized health. As new information emerges, it is important to remember that many factors impact our health. Understanding your individual profile can be one of many tools in your well-being journey.