

Changing Your Genetics Through Nutrition and Lifestyle

Have you ever been told your health fate is written in your genes, or that your future well being is out of your hands? Are you fearful of inheriting the same devastating diagnosis of a family member?

Just this past summer, I had the painful experience of watching my father slowly die, after suffering for years with Alzheimer's disease. I can't lie, my mind occasionally wondered if I too might succumb to this horrific sentence. I often hear patients associate their own health challenges of obesity, diabetes, heart disease, or dementia with the fact that it runs in their family. However, most people fail to realize that chronic illness is driven predominantly by lifestyle choices and not our genetic makeup. It's more likely that we learn the same habits and behaviors of our family members that contribute to a similar state of health. Our individual DNA might increase our susceptibility towards certain illnesses, but our environment including food, water, exercise, sleep, stress, drugs and toxins ultimately determines whether these "bad" genes will ever be expressed. I use the analogy of our genes being like the ammunition in a hand gun, and the environment being the trigger. Our lifestyle and environment are the catalyst, or the "trigger" that gets pulled when we allow negative or harmful things into our lives.

Eighty percent of what we eat today did not even exist 100 years ago. Our food supply has become less nutrient dense, over processed, genetically altered, and tainted with pesticides, artificial colors and artificial sweeteners. Our consumption of sugar laden beverages, cereals, and snack foods have sky rocketed, directly increasing our nation's rate of obesity and type 2 diabetes, not only in adults but in our children. These foods produce nutrient deficiencies, inflammation, fatty accumulation, poor digestion, impaired elimination, and imbalanced microbiome (the healthy bacteria of our gut), all of which can be a trigger for the harmful expression of our genes. As Hippocrates said, "Let food be thy medicine." Healthy food is a powerful way to stop and reverse disease. Don't let any friend, family member, or well intended doctor tell you otherwise.



Other lifestyle factors that can negatively impact our genes include lack of exercise or movement. We have become a sedentary nation, and new research now suggests that sitting is as detrimental to our health as smoking. Being over stressed and under rested can cause an increase in stress hormones, and impair digestion, immune function, and fertility. Toxins are ubiquitous in our environment, including pesticides, herbicides, heavy metals, cleaning products, personal care products, plastics and fire retardants. These can directly impair nerve function, disrupt hormone signaling, and damage DNA, increasing risks for birth defects, cancer, and auto-immune disease. Some commonly prescribed medications have negative side effects that impair our absorption of nutrients, elimination of toxins, and our transmission of impulses in our brains and nerves.

I know this may sound a little overwhelming and perhaps "doomsdayish", but there is a light at the end of the tunnel, and that is that we CAN change our health destination. I soon came to realize, after the passing of my father, that the tragedy and tears

we endure can become a platform for new purpose and direction in life. My new passion is to empower people to become the commander and chief of their own health so they can fully live the life they love. I do this through education, in-office workshops, online lifestyle programs, and functional medicine, which addresses root cause resolution to chronic illness by treating the patient as a whole person, and not just diagnosing and treating symptoms.

Some important lifestyle strategies to consider implementing are: drink filtered water, avoiding plastic, bottled water; eat organic fruits and vegetables whenever possible; avoid processed foods, sodas, fruit juices, and other sugary beverages, artificial colors (found in most colored candy and over the counter vitamins), and artificial sweeteners; walk more; sit less; and manage stress. For more information, you can visit our website: drlaurakorman.com or call our office at 941-629-6700.



Dr. Laura Korman, of Korman Relief & Wellness Center, accepts patients who care about their health and are willing to take control of their health destinies. She is a Diplomate of the American Clinical Board of Nutrition and has over 600 post doctorate classroom hours in nutrition.

Dr. Korman can meet with you remotely or at her Port Charlotte, Florida clinic. Please visit Dr. Korman's website at www.drlaurakorman.com to learn so much more about so many things!

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