

BROADCAST-Decoding your DNA to prevent disease

ANCHOR LEAD-IN

No longer one-size-fits-all, health care is becoming more tailored to every person. OSF HealthCare is piloting a new test that expands on genetic testing to look at nearly your *entire genome* to determine if you're pre-disposed to developing any of the top cancers and other health risks such as diabetes, stroke and Alzheimer's disease.

VO or Radio Package

Dr. Mark Meeker, who sees patients at OSF Medical Group in Galesburg, is one of a handful of doctors who are offering polygenic (pol-ee-GEN-ic) testing as part of a pilot that's still in the early stages. But, he says the test – that just involves a cheek swab – goes beyond family history and genetic testing because it looks at clusters of gene variants ... not just one gene mutation.

“(It’s not) looking for a specific change in a gene that puts you at risk of a specific disease. It’s risk categorization. So, do you have an elevated risk for something like Alzheimer’s or diabetes or colon cancer or breast cancer? Not ‘Do you have the BRCA (Breast Cancer Susceptibility) gene, the specific gene that puts you at risk for breast cancer?’ But ‘Do you have a compilation of genes that puts you in a higher risk category?’”

Dr. Meeker says the results can be used to prescribe increased screening, testing, or lifestyle changes that can prevent disease despite a person being at high risk.

ANCHOR TAG: Polygenic testing is not yet covered by insurance. The current out-of-pocket cost is \$275.