

Neanderthal DNA linked to good health and bad

Scientists have found that Neanderthals and modern humans coexisted for tens of thousands of years in Europe and Asia and often interbred.

It means the genomes of modern Europeans contain about 2 per cent Neanderthal DNA.

Now, a series of studies has suggested that this “legacy” DNA could be playing an important role in human health, with some Neanderthal genes helping build immunity but others increasing the risk of diseases such as cancer and diabetes.

“Interbreeding with Neanderthals would have had costs and benefits for the modern humans who encountered them as they moved out of Africa and into Eurasia,” said professor Chris Stringer, research leader in human origins at the Natural History Museum in London.

Read the full, original story: Neanderthal DNA linked to modern maladies