

5 things you should know before buying a consumer DNA test kit

Genetic testing kits you can do at home seem to be on many holiday wish lists this year; [one even landed on Oprah's list of favorite things](#). The affordable kits, like those from 23andMe and ancestry.com, can scan your genes from a spit sample. But it's important to know what they can and cannot do when it comes to teaching you about your medical well-being. Here are five things to know—before you ship off your saliva—if you get a genetic testing kit for the holidays.

You won't find out everything about your genes

Most genetic testing companies don't actually sequence all three billion base pairs of your entire DNA. They generally focus on certain sections where there is stronger information about what genetic changes mean.

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You'll learn more about where you came from

Much of the appeal of getting your DNA sequenced is learning about how much of your genome you share with people from all over the world. It is possible to discover a surprise Scottish heritage, for example, or even that you're related to George Washington.

Genetic sequencing is particularly good at this, since it can find common DNA denominators among people of different racial and ethnic origins. Some people have even used genetic ancestry testing to find biological parents or lost relatives.

[Editor's note: Click the link below to see the full list]

Read full, original post: [DNA Testing Kits Are on Everyone's Holiday List. 5 Things to Know If You Get One](#)