

DNA test for your dog? Here's what your vet thinks about it

[T]he direct-to-dog-owner market [has become bigger and more crowded](#): Embark, DNA My Dog, and Paw Print Genetics are just a few of [the] companies eager to ship a cheek swab straight to your door. If the story sounds familiar, it's because dog-DNA companies are following in the footsteps of 23andMe. The various dog tests offer breed mixes and, in some cases, risk estimates for more than 150 health conditions. And now, to bring it full circle, dog owners are going to vets with DNA reports in hand.

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"Veterinarians, we're not really educated in clinical genetics, because it's a brand-new field," says Lisa Moses, a veterinarian in Boston. Moses was especially concerned about the health-risk information. Doctors can refer human patients to genetic counselors, she points out, but veterinarians don't have genetic counselors on call for dogs.

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A typical vet isn't likely to be familiar with the details of hundreds of mutations. And in fact, [Kari] Ekenstedt admitted that even she, a trained canine geneticist, isn't. When I asked about a specific trait called alanine-aminotransferase activity, sometimes tested for in dog DNA, she said she wasn't so familiar with it. "Even an expert like me can't keep up," she says. "No regular veterinarian has time to keep up with it. Ultimately, I think we need to have more specialists who are more visible for regular vets to reach out to."

Read full, original post: [What Vets Think of '23andMe for Dogs'](#)