

The Epigenetics of Nutrition

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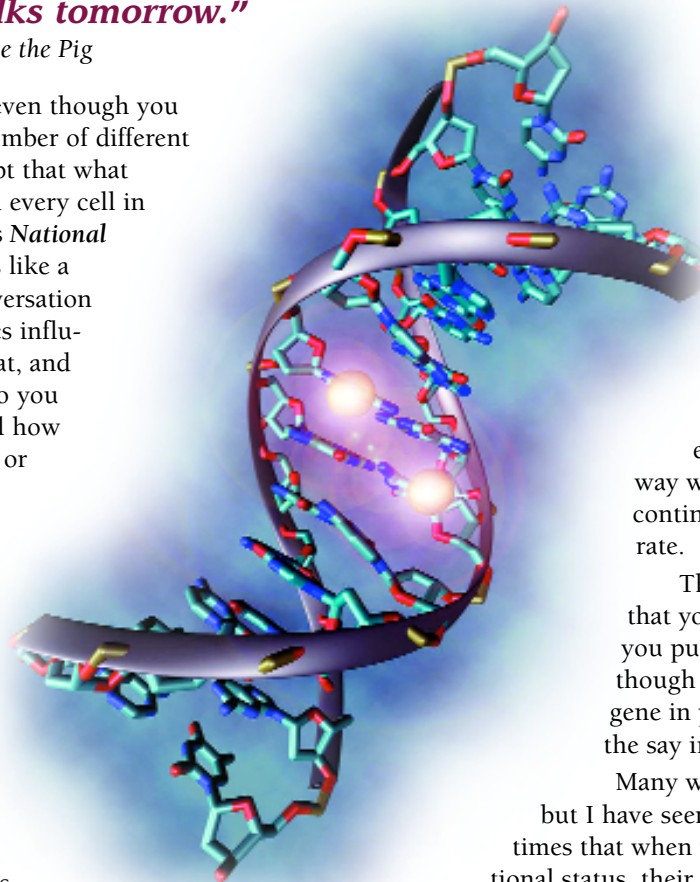
***“What you eat today,
walks and talks tomorrow.”***

—Babe the Pig

I love this saying, and even though you could interpret it a number of different ways, there is no doubt that what you eat controls each and every cell in your body. Since March is *National Nutrition Month*, it seems like a good idea to put the conversation forward: Are your genetics influenced by the foods you eat, and even more importantly, do you have the power to control how your genes are turned on or off through nutrition?

The answer is YES. The new future of medicine is known as Epigenetics- looking at how the genetic code is affected by environmental influences, and how we have the real ability to turn wellness or illness genes on or off through the foods we chose to put in our bodies. If you were to hear someone say, “it’s all in my genes” it’s true, but what you don’t hear people say is, “but I have the power to control them.” Now I’m not talking about hair color, eye color, skin color etc, these things are in the genetic code and make up your physical appearance. But lets say someone is meant to be 6 foot 5, but they were fed a horrible diet as a child—they were malnourished and under-exercised. It’s likely they wouldn’t make it to that height due to the genetic code being altered by deficiency states.

It’s the same with many of today’s epidemic diseases in the modern world like heart disease, diabetes, cancers, and obesity. In a family where both parents have diabetes type 2, some will argue there is a genetic link for their child to get diabetes type 2 when they are older. In truth, if the child was fed a healthy diet devoid of simple carbo-



hydrates and bad fats, and full of vegetables, whole grains, healthy fats, and lean proteins (along with adequate exercise) it is very unlikely that this grown adult will get diabetes, for even if the gene existed, it wouldn’t be turned on. However in today’s world, we see even children getting type 2 diabetes—a sure sign

that if we continue to eat (and stay sedentary) the way we do, gene destruction will continue to happen at an alarming rate.

The bright side to all this is that you have the power over what you put in your body and even though you don’t know every “bad” gene in your body,” you do have the say in what your genes can do.

Many will disagree with me here, but I have seen it in my practice many times that when people improve their nutritional status, their bodies become efficient, leaner, and free of disease, while their minds are calm and bright. Even those who are what we consider to be “diseased” can benefit from a clean, whole-foods diet, often reversing their conditions and/or optimizing their current states. Take this month to educate yourself and others about the importance of healthy food, and remember, you aren’t helpless to your genetic predispositions! ■



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