

Victim of genetics

Description

Gentle Reader,

One of my clarion calls has been “Don’t be a victim of your genes.” Recent genetic studies indicate that some conditions that “victimize” people are dramatically challenging. My local Seattle Times carried an article discussing the latest research findings published in [The Lancet, Diabetes and Endocrinology](#). Turns out there are 32 genetic variations that have been linked to obesity. In one study of 148 women between 35 and 60, those who carried 21 or more of these genetic variations did not benefit from resistance training. No matter how much they worked out in the gym, their genetic makeup *protected their fat stores and prevented weight loss*. Looks like these people are a victim of genetics.



Do fat-genes make you a victim?

In some of our bodies, lowering calories and increasing exercise cause a famine response. We store more calories, no matter what. If you have fewer of these genetic

variations, lowering calories and working out results in weight loss. The difficult alleles (one of two or more alternative forms of a gene that arise by mutation and are found at the same place on a chromosome), seem to work together to keep the body from losing weight. In fact, they strive to get you back to the highest poundage you ever weighed. If you succeed in achieving normal weight, you are considered to be obese-in-remission.

What shall we conclude from this miserable information? (Sometime I wish we didn't have all this new data about our genetic makeup.)



The endomorph body type is more likely to hold excess weight.

I am neither a doctor nor a scientific researcher, however, I have been observing my own body over time and been in close contact with hundreds of people who have discussed their health issues with me. One of the questions I ask people when we sit down for an advisory session is *"What did your parents die of?"* If they are not dead yet: *"What health challenges do your parent/relatives face?"*

In my own case, my hair was thinning, my fingernails were breaking and splitting, my joints ached and I suffered from arthritis at age 48. I had dandruff, bleeding gums and smelly arm-pits. My PMS was terrible and I yo-yo dieted. My doctor never asked me these questions, but Jayme Curley did. Jayme was the person who introduced me to

supplementation. In the preventative health world, these answers tell us what tendencies your body has toward various future conditions. I had breast cancer at age 34. I wondered if a poor immune system might be the cause. No professional health care provider will travel down the road of cause with cancer, but after looking at my various poor health markers, Jayme concluded I might not have a strong immune system.

My mother had the splitting nails, bleeding gums and the menopause rages. My father had psoriasis and arthritis and caught colds constantly. I was following in their footsteps.

I reversed all these unsavory traits by introducing better nutrition—protein and vitamin supplements—into my diet. Having cancer so young put me on a mission to outwit any deficiencies my body had which would lead to cancer. My new supplement regimen helped when all the attempts I had made to mitigate these various minor symptoms before supplementing had failed, including maintaining a healthy weight.

For the record, my youngest daughter had two cancers at an early age which prompted her HMO to do a genetic study. Low and behold, her blood and mine (they wanted the parents but the father was dead) are genetically skewed at P53. P53 has a DNA repair function which, when wild or variant, doesn't do its job.

Stay with me, here. Suppose I had decided I had no choice but to be like my parents and live with these minor ailments, yo-yo dieting and medicating heavily at the slightest twinge of sinus infection or arthritis? That would have made me a “victim” of my genetics. Before I knew I have a genetic pre-disposition for cancer, I declared myself a victor over future cancers. My mother had breast cancer at age 74; my cousin died of breast cancer; another of melanoma and another of a brain tumor (two of the three deadlies that come with P53 variant). Am I just the lucky cousin?

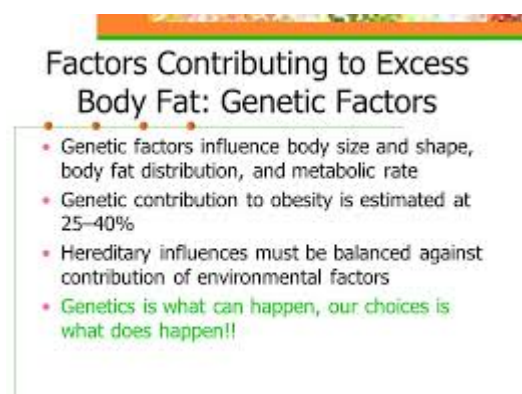
In the case of obesity and obesity in remission
The Lancet article offers medical intervention



for these people.
erately over-weight

for obesity genes, I'm sure I would have a handful of the 32, maybe even the dreaded 21 that put women over the edge. I feel as though I am an "over-weight-in-remission" person. To change my body into the relatively lean one I live in today, I had to go after an unhealthy sugar addiction but cutting out all sugar including grapes (forever mostly) and all other fruit for a period of time. I was rigid for years about white flour and sugar. I've been able to relax, but continue to avoid refined flour, sugary snacks, baked goods and I limit my fruit intake. I have always eased myself out the door to exercise, even when the book/computer/bed held me back.

While the morbidly obese have what seems like an insurmountable struggle, those of us who tend to pack in on easily and have a hard time getting it off again, would do well to claim the victor attitude, rather than the victim.



Factors Contributing to Excess Body Fat: Genetic Factors

- Genetic factors influence body size and shape, body fat distribution, and metabolic rate
- Genetic contribution to obesity is estimated at 25–40%
- Hereditary influences must be balanced against contribution of environmental factors
- Genetics is what can happen, our choices is what does happen!!

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Fool your body with gentle and gradually increased exercise and modest food changes. We may be better off not calorie counting, pushing the numbers so low our body goes into starvation-avoidance mode. Get out the glycemic index chart and avoid the foods that contain the most sugar while loading up on the low-glycemic foods. I like a diabetic-safe soy protein shake loaded with vegetables and I pay attention every day, whether home or abroad, to how many vegetables I eat.

I will probably never have a flat belly or slim hips. We can love our bodies the way they are. One thing is sure: when your diet is heavy on the protein/vegetable end and you take

some form of exercise every day, your brain, your immune system, your sense of well being are all enhanced. Does it matter, really, if you are never a size 6?

When articles like the one on Mother's Day claim our genes may be at fault, I worry that some may give up the effort and believe themselves to be a victim of genetics. Why not eat what I love and crave: I'm going to be over-weight anyway? This is victim thinking. It could lead to diabetes (another condition that ran in my family), a poor immune response, arthritis and heart disease. Be a victor, no matter what your parents dished up. You'll feel better and live longer.

Be well, Do well and Keep Moving,

Betsy

PS: If you are reading this and you are morbidly obese and have tried everything, are at your wits' end, I have great empathy for your situation. I don't mean to be flip or suggest this is a 1, 2, 3 easy change. No doubt you have sought medical help already. If I can support you in any way, let me know. For the psychological aspect of the issue, you might take a look at <http://workwithgrace.com/eating-peace/>.

I love your comments, and read every one.

If you are interested in the protein shake I use, you can find it [here](#).



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