

Health Awareness

Taking the Mystery Out of Genetics: New Web Site Explains Genes, Chromosomes, and Genetic Conditions

(NAPSA)—How does DNA make me who I am? What does it mean if a medical condition “runs in the family”? What does genetics have to do with mad cow disease?

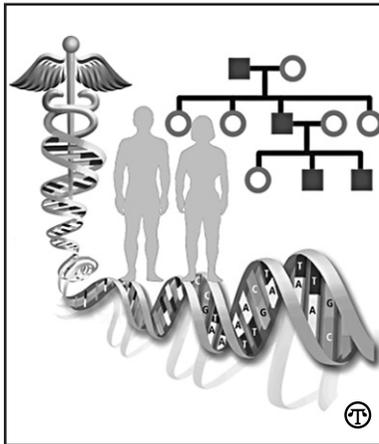
Genetics Home Reference (<http://ghr.nlm.nih.gov/>), a new Web site from the National Library of Medicine (NLM), is a great place to start looking for answers to your genetics questions.

Created for patients and the general public, the site’s explanations are written in straightforward, clear English.

“Genetics is a complex subject, and much of the technical data from the Human Genome Project is hard to understand without formal training,” said NLM Director Dr. Donald A.B. Lindberg.

“With its consumer-friendly language and clear illustrations, Genetics Home Reference makes genetics and its impact on health accessible to the general public for the first time.” The resource is confidential, noncommercial and free.

“Genetics Home Reference is for people living with genetic conditions, a site where they and their families can find reliable information about the genetic issues that matter to them,” said Dr. Alexa T. McCray, Director of the Lister Hill National Center for Biomedical Communications, the



A new Web site helps explain what genetics can mean to you.

research and development division of the NLM that created the site. “Our goal is to provide an online resource that makes essential information about genetics available to everyone.”

If you or a family member is affected by an inherited condition, you probably have many questions. You can search or browse Genetics Home Reference to find information about specific diseases and conditions, or even read about a particular gene or chromosome. A search for “Alzheimer’s disease,” for instance, leads you to a page that describes the disease’s signs and symptoms, how people

inherit the condition, and where to look for more information.

You can also easily find details on the genes related to Alzheimer’s disease.

Some people may grasp the basics of genetics, but want to learn more. If you’re the sort of person who remembers “a little from high school biology class,” you can take a quick refresher course by clicking on the Help Me Understand Genetics feature. There you will learn about the fundamentals of genetics, such as how a gene makes a protein, what it means if a disorder seems to run in a family, and the risks and benefits of genetic testing.

Other features of the new Web site include a glossary of genetic and medical terms, links to clinical trials and support groups for your condition of interest, and more advanced genetic information. Genetics Home Reference will be adding new information about conditions and genes regularly, and the information is reviewed and updated often.

The National Library of Medicine, the world’s largest health sciences library, is located in Bethesda, Maryland. The Library is part of the National Institutes of Health, an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.