

Leyla Weighs In: Health or disease? You choose

written by Leyla Muedin MS, RD, CDN | March 3, 2023



March is National Nutrition Month.

Health or Disease? *YOU choose.*

Believe it. In many cases, you have a choice.

The state of our health care system today doesn't promote health. It is more like a "sick care system" in my opinion, and it seems more people are afraid for the future of their health with each progressive screening. Many are just waiting for the proverbial "shoe to drop" of receiving an unexpected diagnosis after a routine office visit. For some of you, it would be fair to say you feel like it's not a matter of if, but *when* you will come down with some kind of health issue that would require medical intervention like drugs or surgery, or both. You base this on the fact that it runs in your family—"it's in my genes!" or that it's inevitable as we get older.

Deep breath. We're finding out that genetics isn't everything. For example, just because your parents and/or grandparents had diabetes doesn't mean you're destined to as well. Many chronic conditions like diabetes, heart disease, dementia, inflammatory bowel disease, autoimmune diseases, and as much as 50 percent of cancers are triggered by lifestyle, not genes.

Your genes may be the loaded gun, but it's your health choices that actually pull the trigger. In other words, you have to be living a lifestyle that *supports* the progression of diabetes, heart disease, and cancer. They don't just appear. We pull the trigger with our chosen behavior. Many of our health issues are indeed lifestyle choices resulting in metabolic abnormalities that promote disease.

In the world of integrative and functional medicine, food is indeed nourishment but it is also *information*. Food has the ability to turn genes on *or off*. We have the ability with our food choices and how we live to stop, reverse, and put into remission many of our chronic diseases. Take heed as there is truth in these proverbs:

"Let food be thy medicine, and let medicine be thy food." — Hippocrates

"The patient who does not pay attention to diet is wasting the physician's time." – Chinese Proverb

"When diet is wrong, medicine is of no use. When diet is correct, medicine is of no need." – Ayurvedic Proverb

To your health!

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