

# Activating "Health" Genes For A Longer, Healthier Life

*"Each of us have 20,000 genes, and we can turn them on or off for wellness or illness with the food we eat and the lifestyles we choose."*

Clinicians are constantly looking for ways to help patients take responsibility for their health. Books, CDs, charts all have a place as we strive to find the hot button for our patients as to what will motivate change. Sometimes the hot button is negatively charged, like the fear of heart disease. Sometimes it is positively charged like the quest for tight abs, healthy skin or clear thinking. How's this for a hot button, "Each of us have 20,000 genes and we can turn them on or off for wellness or illness with the food we eat and the lifestyles we choose."

The new book Pottenger's Prophecy addresses this issue head on. The subtitle? "How Food Resets Our Genes For Wellness Or Illness." Founder of the Nutritional Therapy Association and a good friend Gray Graham has teamed up with research scientist Dr. Larry Scherwitz, and author Deborah Kesten to present a compelling motivation for



change. Although the book is written for the lay public, the authors fully document their case for the professional reader. The reader is left with a passionate yet compassionate plea for change.

To me there is a sense of "finality" and something very "official" about affecting ones genes. People may go on a diet to lose weight or keep their blood sugar low, but how about principles that will upgrade or downgrade the integrity of the genes in

YOUR body? That's a pretty powerful motivator for me and one that when articulated properly will motivate patients.

Epigenetics is an emerging field of science that refers to factors that can affect a cell, an organ or individual without directly affecting its DNA. An epigenetic change may indirectly influence the expression of the genome. The concept is that the expression of our genes, not the DNA itself but the expression,

can be turned on or off. The authors of Pottenger's Prophecy present compelling data that food has the power to reset genes and in turn influence the chronic conditions many people struggle with today: obesity, heart disease, diabetes, metabolic syndrome and cancer, not only for them but for their children.

We are all familiar with the fact that chemicals particularly pesticides and herbicides have negative side effects. I saw two articles about polar bears and how they experienced hypothyroidism and osteoporosis from the chemicals they ingest. Hey, if polar bears are experiencing problems from chemicals, how about us? How does that translate into what we buy at the grocery store?

Pottenger's Prophecy gives concrete suggestions to reduce the amount of chemicals we ingest. The authors refer to foods most likely to be contaminated as "The Dirty Dozen:" peaches, apples, bell peppers, celery, nectarines, strawberries, cherries, kale, lettuce, grapes, carrots and pears. Just because a food is on that list doesn't mean that you shouldn't eat it; however, "The Dirty Dozen" are foods we should try to eat organically.

Another list, "The Clean 15" is foods less likely contaminated: papaya, watermelon, broccoli, tomato, sweet potato, asparagus, sweet pea, kiwi, cabbage, eggplant, onions, avocado, pineapple, mango and even sweet corn.

Sometimes when you read a book you are struck with the sense of "what to do." Habits are tough to change. Pottenger's Prophecy gives inspiration and that sense of "I'm going to do that." The book goes into great detail about food and lifestyle.

To help you with your patients, I've created a one page "Press Release" or maybe a better

term would be "patient release" from Pottenger's Prophecy that you can use with your patients. The book is full of studies that you can put in your own words on your stationary to motivate your patients.

Here's one I found compelling. A 6,000 person study was done in China, where breast cancer genes were identified. The women with the defective gene who had a low intake of cruciferous vegetables had a 1.7 fold increased risk for breast cancer over women with the defective gene who had a high intake of cruciferous vegetables. Now that's a good reason to eat your veggies.

One of the things I appreciate about this book is the absence of dietary supplements. I think nutritional supplements are critical in 21st Century America. But the "take a pill mentality" even seeps into a Wellness consciousness. How many times do you hear someone telling you about an issue and inadvertently you are thinking about nutrient strategies that may fix their condition? You see the cracks in the corners of someone's mouth or deep rivets in their tongue and you want to tell them they are deficient in B vitamins. And your recommendations may be correct. But we need real food as the basis of life and then supplementation takes on its intended role.

My underlying passion is always "how do we get ourselves, our families and our patients to eat real food and manage our lifestyle in a way that brings life?" The new book Pottenger's Prophecy, How Food and Lifestyle Can Reset our Genes for Wellness or Illness, may not motivate everyone but it certainly motivates me.

Thanks for reading this week's edition. I will see you next Tuesday.