

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

about Pharmacogenomics



## What is Pharmacogenomics?

Testing to learn how genes work with certain medications is called “pharmacogenomic” or “PGx” testing. With a PGx test, we analyze your genes to find differences that can help your healthcare provider choose the safest and most effective medications for you.

## How do my genes impact the medications I take?

When you take a medication, your body uses enzymes to metabolize (break down) the medication and remove it from your body. Differences in your DNA (that make up genes) can change how well you are able to remove certain medications from your body by these enzymes. Depending on your genetic makeup, you may have decreased or increased sensitivity to certain medicines.

For example, you may break down a medication very slowly or quickly; in these cases, the standard dose of that medication may not suit you. Some gene differences prevent a medication from working as expected, and your PGx test results will help your healthcare provider choose a better medication for you.

## Will I benefit from PGx testing?

Your healthcare providers may choose to order a PGx test for you if:

- You have experienced side effects from your current or previous medications
- You have not experienced improvements in your symptoms with current or previous medications
- They have needed to make frequent adjustments to your medications
- You have been diagnosed with a new condition and need to be prescribed multiple new medications
- You are being treated with medications for any of the following conditions:

- |  |                                       |                                  |
|--|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| - Acid Reflux/GERD                                     | - Heart Conditions                    | - Post-traumatic Stress Disorder |
| - Anxiety Disorders                                    | - High Cholesterol                    | - Rheumatoid Arthritis           |
| - Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorders (ADHD) | - Infections                          | - Schizophrenia                  |
| - Cancer   | - Inflammatory Conditions             | - Stroke                         |
| - Crohn's Disease                                      | - Nausea and Vomiting                 | - And other conditions           |
| - Depression and Mood Disorders                        | - Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) |                                  |
| - Epilepsy and Seizures                                | - Pain conditions                     |                                  |

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## **Aren't all medications tested to be sure they are safe and effective?**

Yes, the pharmaceutical companies and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) carefully study and analyze all medications before approving them for use.

Approved medications and recommended doses represent standards that work well for most people. However, because individuals have different variations in their genes, some medicines may not be effective or safe for everyone.

## **How does PGx testing work?**

Once your healthcare provider orders your PGx test, a DNA sample will be collected by gently swabbing the inside of your cheek. Your sample will be sent to AccessDx Laboratory to be processed and analyzed.

## **How long do my PGx test results last?**

Your PGx test results can benefit you throughout your lifetime because your genes do not change. Your healthcare providers may continue to use these results to help determine the best medication treatments in the future.

The only reason you might need another PGx test will be if your healthcare provider decides to test additional genes or variations that might not have been included in the original test.

## **How can I be sure my PGx information is kept private?**

The results of PGx testing are protected by the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA).

## **Does my insurance pay for this testing?**

The out-of-pocket cost of PGx testing varies depending on your health insurance coverage. Many insurance companies cover PGx testing, depending on the policy and reasons for testing. For more information about PGx testing coverage, contact your insurance company.

## **What's next?**

If your healthcare provider has already ordered a PGx test for you, they will contact you when your results are available.

If your healthcare provider has not yet ordered a PGx test, please ask them if they feel you would benefit from PGx testing.