



Why genetic testing?

How genetic testing can help
improve employee health

Aetna® Industry Solutions — High Tech



It's comforting to know that advances in genetic testing can have a significant positive effect on employee health. Genetic testing can offer insights and knowledge that can help employees take steps to improve health outcomes or prevent disease. As a result, many high-tech employers today are providing genetic testing benefits to their employees. In this article, we'll look at why genetic testing matters, specifically in high tech. And how to make sure you offer the right genetic testing benefits that will help keep your employees healthy and productive.



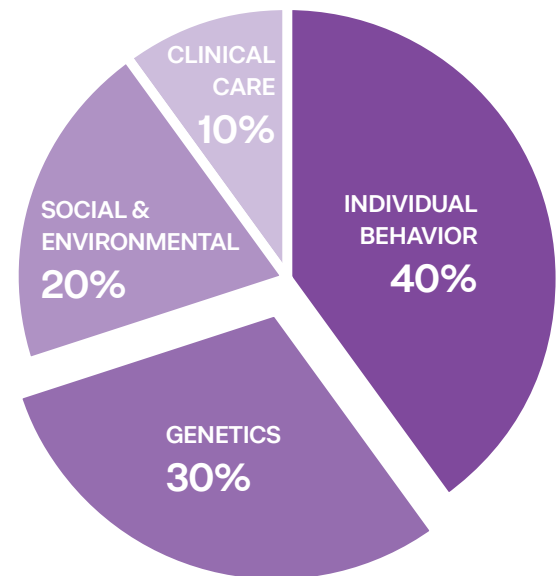
Why genetic testing matters to high-tech employers

Health of employees

Genetics continues to be an important variable in the health of employees. In fact, genetics is the second biggest factor in premature deaths.¹

To get access to the genetic information that can improve health outcomes, many seek out genetic tests. The right testing assesses a person's genetic risk for certain diseases and conditions. It can also provide insights that can help people take proactive steps to reduce their risks or even prevent disease. This means genetic testing can also influence the number one factor in premature death — individual behavior. **By providing their employees and families with a better understanding of their genetic risks and with information they can use to change their behavior, high-tech employers can see healthier and more engaged and productive employees.**

Factors that impact premature death



(Source: Kaiser Foundation. Beyond Health Care: The Role of Social Determinants in Promoting Health and Health Equity. 2015.)

¹ Aetna Inc. Aetna Facts. 2019. Available at: [Aetna.com/about-us/aetna-facts-and-subsidiaries/aetna-facts.html](https://www.aetna.com/about-us/aetna-facts-and-subsidiaries/aetna-facts.html). Accessed August 2019.

Rising incidence of key health issues in high-tech

Recently, Aetna® saw a faster-than-average increase in reproductive, cardiac and cancer care among members in high tech. These health issues correspond with genetic tests that can provide members and their doctors with actionable information that can improve health outcomes.

“We are seeing a rise in the amount of treatments administered in the high-tech industry for reproductive services, cardiovascular disease and inherited cancer predisposition,” says Dr. Joanne Armstrong, Enterprise Head of Genomics and Women’s Health at CVS Health®. “These are all conditions where appropriate genetic testing can be transformative to individual health outcomes.”

The rising incidence of certain health issues in high tech*



8.1%

increase in chemotherapy treatment claims



15.7%

increase in number of pre-conception services**



10%

of Aetna high-tech members have been diagnosed with a cardiac condition

Personal demand

As the demand for proactive genetic information continues to rise, the popularity of consumer DNA testing kits also keeps growing. However, not all testing options are high quality, or the most appropriate for every individual.

For those with a personal or family history of health problems, test offerings that lack a genetic counseling component can leave them with an incomplete or possibly inaccurate picture of their genetic risks. By offering clinical-grade genetic testing and counseling when it matters most, high-tech employers can help employees get the most complete information about their individual health risks and options. This allows employees and their families to seek preventive care or treatment options proactively, ultimately improving health outcomes.

“We don’t think anyone should have to trade clinical-grade testing and guidance from genetic experts for convenience and low cost,” says Armstrong. **“They should be able to have both.”**

*Aetna Consultative Analytic Impact Report High Tech, 2018M12

**Including infertility treatments

Guidance by genetic experts and clinical-grade testing can improve health outcomes

As the saying goes, knowledge is power. Providing your employees with knowledge of their genetic risks and giving them guidance can empower them to take actions that might reduce those risks. It can even help prevent future disease. A brief risk assessment based on personal and family medical history finds people who can benefit from a guided interaction with a genetic expert. Genetic experts then determine the most appropriate genetic testing options based on individual risks and preferences. Expert interpretation of the test results makes sure that personalized guidance is provided. This expert guidance is focused on prevention opportunities and earlier disease diagnosis. It can even identify the most effective treatment options available if disease does occur.



Prevention

Genetic testing and expert counseling provides employees with knowledge of their individual risks for certain genetic diseases and health conditions. This information can help members make the lifestyle changes that can reduce their risk or even prevent future disease.

Diagnosis

Genetic testing identifies risks for certain diseases and conditions earlier. Early detection can lead to more targeted disease screening. This can enable earlier diagnoses and improve the likelihood of successful treatment.

Treatment

Genetic testing can lead to the selection of safer and more effective treatment options for certain genetic diseases and conditions. This includes those treatments targeted at the underlying genetic causes of the disease or condition.

What to look for in a guided genetic health partner

Expert guidance

Our Guided Genetic Health program gives members access to telephone or online genetic counseling, depending on whether they have any personal or family history that calls for a one-to-one discussion with a genetic counselor. These genetic counselors are experts who guide members toward getting the right genetic tests based on their history. They can also help advise who can interpret the results, and, when necessary, help members build a plan of action based on those results.



Laboratory testing quality

This is a key differentiator. We're an industry leader in providing access to high-quality laboratories that adhere to strict standards and tests that deliver a high level of accuracy. This ensures that the tests are clinical grade. That means the results do not need to be verified with follow-up tests, unlike many non-clinical testing options on the market today.

Member privacy

Some of the direct-to-consumer testing laboratories share or even sell genetic test results and data about the individual tested with one or more third parties. Under the Guided Genetic Health program, test results are never shared with Aetna or any other party except your employee's physician, and only if they decide to share them. Your employee's private genetic information will never be sold.



Low cost

Genetic testing can lead to high, and often unexpected, out-of-pocket costs that can cause employee dissatisfaction. That's why our Guided Genetic Health program provides clinical-grade testing at a single low price that runs through the medical benefit.

For example, for reproductive screening, testing both parents is key. But this could double the cost in traditional testing labs. However, our Guided Genetic Health program lets both partners get tested for a single low cost. By including genetic testing through the medical benefit, the Guided Genetic Health program combats the potential for expensive surprise billing that employees often face with non-clinical-grade tests.

A focus on outcomes

Achieving high-quality and cost-effective outcomes takes a dedication to excellence. This is achieved by focusing on improving medical outcomes at every turn.

"Aetna has been a pioneer in offering their members access to high-quality genetic testing and genetic counseling services for over 20 years," says Heather L. Shappell, M.S., CGC – Genetic Counselor and Precision Medicine Program Manager at Aetna. **"Guided Genetic Health's emphasis on test selection, result interpretation and the development of a personalized action plan by expert genetic counselors is focused on one thing: enabling better health outcomes."**

**Knowledge is power.
And no one knows
that better than the
high-tech industry.**

To learn more about our Guided Genetic Health program,
simply contact your Aetna sales representative or visit:

[Aetna.com/High-Tech](https://www.aetna.com/High-Tech)

Aetna is the brand name used for products and services provided by one or more of the Aetna group of companies, including Aetna Life Insurance Company and its affiliates (Aetna). Aetna is a part of the CVS Health family of companies.

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