

Many of the most common health conditions, such as heart disease and stroke, are considered to be multifactorial. This means that there are many things that determine whether or not someone will develop that specific medical condition.

Diabetes, for example, is likely caused by a mixture of genetics, lifestyle choices, and environment. However, how much genetics affects someone's risk may vary family to family. For example, if Jay has three relatives who have diabetes, his risk may be higher to develop diabetes than Anne, who has no family history of diabetes.

With multifactorial conditions, heredity may offer some information as to someone's risk, but it is complex and our understanding of these health issues is constantly evolving. Some common multifactorial conditions are:

- [heart disease](#)
- high blood pressure
- Alzheimer's disease
- arthritis
- diabetes
- obesity
- [cancer](#)
- high blood pressure
- high cholesterol
- thyroid disorders
- some birth defects, such as cleft lip and/or palate, spina bifida, and heart defects

Some families may have a more significant genetic cause to their health issues, particularly with certain types of [heart disease](#) or [cancer](#). A genetic counselor can review your personal and family history, and can provide more insight into what your specific risk might be.

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Genetic, or hereditary, conditions can be passed down in a family in many different ways: Autosomal Dominant Autosomal Recessive X-Linked Mitochondrial Multifactorial

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When it comes to genetics, it's not all about you; your entire family's health history is important. There are many health conditions where someone's risk to also develop that condition is determined by their family history. Because of this, it is important to try to gather as much information about...

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