

[IMAGE]

How to Change Your DNA (But Not in a Good Way)

By Editorial Staff

You may have heard that an increasing body of research suggests our DNA can change shape, structure or function in response to different environmental influences. Exercise is a good example. According to a [2014 study](#), exercise may positively influence gene expression, particularly the methylation patterns of muscle cell genes.

Smoking is another example, but not a good one like exercise. In fact, a recent study suggests smoking causes extensive damage to DNA after only one year. Consuming one pack of cigarettes daily for one year caused significant mutations to lung, larynx and oral cavity cells, "accelerating the risk of genetic mutations." The more genetic mutations, the higher the risk cancer-causing genes will be impacted.

DNA - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark This isn't the first time we've reported on the known health risks associated with smoking, and unfortunately, it won't be the last, because an estimated 16.8 percent of U.S. adults smoke cigarettes as of 2014. While the percentage seems to be declining slightly in recent years, that's still nearly 17 of every hundred adults who are risking widespread DNA damage and life-threatening health risks. Is it worth the risk? You tell us. If you're a smoker or know someone who'd like to quit, [click here](#) to take the most important step and talk to your doctor.

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