

Genetic Testing

The Alzheimer's Association position on genetic testing includes five principles intended to prevent genetic discrimination. These apply to current tests for early-onset genes and to reliable tests that may eventually be developed to predict late-onset Alzheimer's.

1. Having the APOE-e4 gene does not mean a person has or will develop Alzheimer's disease.
2. The presence of a gene associated with Alzheimer's disease should not be used to deny access to housing, employment, health care, insurance or any other goods and services.
3. The presence of a gene associated with Alzheimer's disease does not qualify an individual for disability-related benefits. Disability support should be based on functional criteria rather than a genetic test.
4. Because of possible social consequences or discrimination, anonymous testing should be available, thereby making the fact of and results of genetic testing for Alzheimer's disease invisible on an individual's medical records.
5. If performed, genetic testing for Alzheimer's should be done with pre- and post-test counseling, which includes a full discussion of the implication of the test and provides the individual with all information necessary to make an informed decision. All genetic counseling and information should be provided in culturally and linguistically appropriate formats and should take into account an individual's literacy level.

— Adopted by the Alzheimer's Association Medical and Scientific Advisory Council, April 2008