MAKING SENSE OF YOUR HEALTH RISKS

What did you hear?
- A family member has a genetic disease
- There is a disease outbreak
- An ad for a new drug is on TV
- Some foods are good for you
- I got my genetic testing kit results
- A friend told me...

What does this mean to you?
Get PERSPECTIVE on the numbers. How health numbers are used can affect how scary or reassuring something sounds.
EXAMPLE: Disease X affects 20% of people, or 2 in 10 people.
- You could also say Disease X does not affect 80% of people, or 8 in 10 people.

Take control!
If you learn you are at increased risk for a disease or condition, take control of the situation.

Are you worried?
Being at risk doesn’t mean that something will definitely happen; it is just a possibility. Here are some questions to ask:
WHO does this health news affect?
A few people? A lot? People like me?
WHAT is the source of this information?
Can I trust it?
Are people WHERE I live, work, or travel affected?
WHEN would this apply to me – always, or just during certain times (such as during pregnancy, while traveling, or in infancy)?
HOW certain is this risk?

Look for the ACTUAL chance of being affected by this health news.
Read health statements carefully to find, and understand, actual risk.
UNCLEAR: “This drug reduces risk by half.”
CLEAR: “This drug reduces risk from 2% to 1%.”
These both mean the same thing. Words like “half” or “double” can be alarming and potentially misleading. Look past those words for numbers and percentages that cite actual risk.

CAN’T CHANGE
- Age
- Family History
- Genes

MAY BE ABLE TO CHANGE
- Sleep
- Physical Environment
- Social
- Screening
- Diet
- Physical Activity
- Habits
- Safety

For more information, please visit: HEALTH.NIH.GOV