



Transcript: #358 How to Find and Use Your Genetics to Optimize Your Diet and Health Choices with Joe Cohen

Wendy Myers: Hello, everyone, I'm Wendy Myers of MyersDetox.com. Thank you so much for joining the Myers Detox Podcast where we talk about everything related to heavy metal and chemical detoxification. Today, we're going to be talking about your genetics.

Wendy Myers: We have my friend, Joe Cohen, of selfhacked.com and selfdecode.com on the show. He'll talk to you about finding out your genetics for weight gain, thyroid, diabetes and other health conditions. You can use this information to make more individualized choices for your diet, your health and your lifestyle. We'll discuss why this is so important, as well. We're going to be talking about why almost all doctors don't use genes to make recommendations for you. It's just mind boggling.

Wendy Myers: We'll also talk about how knowing your genes would help with finding a specific diet and lifestyle supplement approach to counteract or to navigate around your individual genetic variations. We'll discuss how to discover the genes that make you susceptible to weight gain or diabetes.

Wendy Myers: We'll also talk about how many genetic companies today are selling your information about your genes to pharmaceutical companies. We'll tell you how to find a company that won't sell your information. I know a lot of people that want to do their genetic tests but are really worried about their privacy and their medical information being shared or used against them. We'll talk about how you can't get your genes done and not have to worry about that.

Wendy Myers: I know all of you who are listening, are concerned about the level of toxins you have in your body. That's why you're listening to this show. I've created a two-minute quiz that you can take after answering some lifestyle questions. We'll give you results that will tell you about your relative level of toxins in your body, your body burden of toxins.

Wendy Myers: You can take that quiz at heavymetalsquiz.com. It only takes a couple of minutes. Afterwards, you will get your results and a free video series that I created specifically to answer your most frequently asked questions related to detox. How long does it take? What kind of testing should I do? Where do I get started? I answer so many questions on this totally free video series, so go check it out at heavymetalsquiz.com.

Wendy Myers: Our guest today, Joe Cohen, is a well-known biohacker and founder of selfhacked.com. I love his website. It's so thoroughly researched. He has tons of evidence-based health and performance information that reaches 2 million visitors each month. He has quite a fascinating background. He likes to say that he won the genetic lottery of bad genes.

Wendy Myers: As a kid, he suffered from inflammation, brain fog, fatigue, digestive problems, anxiety, depression and other issues that were poorly understood in both the conventional and alternative medicine fields. This is why he embarked on a journey of self-experimentation and started selfhacked.com. He's also the founder of selfdecode.com, which lets people get personalized health recommendations based on their genes.

Wendy Myers: Joe, thank you so much for coming on the show.

Joe Cohen: Thank you for having me, Wendy.

Wendy Myers: I follow your work. I love your work. I love your website, SelfHacked. I'm thrilled to have you come on the show. First, why don't you tell us about your story, like how you got into health. We're going to talk about genes, detoxification, thyroid and weight. We'll discuss how genes affect a lot of your health outcomes, but first tell us how you got into this.

Joe Cohen: Growing up, I had like a lot of health issues. Over time they were getting worse, not better, which is not surprising. If you do the same thing, the issues are going to get worse. I was always kind of into health even as an adolescent. Because I always had health issues, I was always trying to optimize my health. I was trying different things. Once they started getting worse, in my mid-20s, I decided I needed to focus on it full-time in order to really understand what was going on.

Joe Cohen: I felt like everyone had a unique biology. We're all unique in our own ways. I was reading some general health information. I also went to conventional doctors. They weren't really focused on optimal health or things that were not

conventional diseases, like cancer or heart disease or something like that. I didn't have any of those. I had more general inflammation and no kind of autoimmune disease that they could diagnose. I felt like the conventional doctors were not my route.

Joe Cohen: I went to some alternative doctors but I felt like the care wasn't being individualized. It was like a template. Sometimes the template could be good. What happens to people with specific issues is that they follow someone with similar issues. They get a template that worked for that individual and it can work for them as well. I didn't really fit into any template. I had my own issues. Some people had some of the issues, but I felt like I needed to get to the root of the issues. I needed to really understand my body to understand natural supplements or natural health strategies and how they interact with my body.

Joe Cohen: That's how I started SelfHacked, basically as a personal research blog. Then I evolved it into basically a health encyclopedia that was very in-depth and very thorough. I realized that I needed to get into personalization tools that would help me and others to really dig down into the root cause, the genetic causes, and also lab tests that were worsening their health issues.

Wendy Myers: I love your site so much. It's so thorough, it's so well researched and you always have so many references to support everything that you're talking about. You have very thorough articles. I highly, highly recommend it. I also love that you're getting into this individualized concept of healthcare because I find it very scary that when you go to a conventional medical doctor, they're not looking at your genetics at all.

Wendy Myers: They're making all kinds of recommendations for medications. A functional doctor will recommend supplements based on your genetics. Vitamin C can be amazing for one person and even lethal for another person. I think that I would never go to any kind of functional practitioner or medical doctor unless they were looking at your genetics.

Joe Cohen: Genetics are obviously huge, right? I had a lot of autoimmune issues, gut issues and mood issues. For a lot of them, my mom had them and my grandmother had them so obviously there's a genetic cause. I got rid of all my issues. What we know is that genetics were very influential for me because we see that I had this background. We also know that there are ways to counteract negative genetics. The critical thing is to really understand what are the most important genes that are contributing to an issue you're dealing with.

Joe Cohen: If we look at weight, for example, at the end of the day we know that a lot of it is environmental because the obesity rate and weight problems are going up over time. We also know that it's highly genetic. Often you'll see parents who are overweight and their kids will be much more likely to be overweight too. Weight is actually one of these interesting areas where the science has said that the

genetics of weight, obesity or excess weight, is basically somewhere between 20 to 80 some-odd percent, which is a lot.

Joe Cohen: For some people, it could be a lot more where it's very heavily genetic, they're trying everything and both of their parents are overweight. It could be very heavily genetic. Obviously, there are also environmental factors. We know that as you get older, you're more likely to gain weight during menopause with lower estrogen. There's a lot of things that change in the body due to hormones. We know that weight can be influenced and we also know that it's heavily genetic.

Joe Cohen: There are also some people that no matter what they do, from their perspective, they can't gain weight. There are a lot of people who would say, no matter what they do, they can't lose weight. You see these two sides of the spectrum. These people can be eating the exact same diet and they still have very different weight profiles. One person could be very gaunt and another person could be obese, while they are eating the same thing. Many people are trying to lose weight. It's something that's very common in our society, especially as you get older.

Joe Cohen: We know that weight is an example of something that is genetic, The same goes for longevity. If you have parents that live a long time, then you're more likely to live longer. We also know that if you do the right things for your body, you're more likely to live longer, right? It basically goes like that with everything. I have these genetics for bad gut genes and autoimmune genes, but I've been able to overcome them.

Joe Cohen: A lot of people with my same issues have not been able to overcome them. The reason is because you really have to dig down into the genetic basis of why someone is overweight or even underweight. This is going to be a genetic basis. You also have to look at your lab tests. There are going to be things like hormones and sometimes your genetics can't really tell that stuff.

Joe Cohen: The lab tests are basically telling you what is happening right now in your body. Even though your genetics can predispose you to certain levels of hormones, at the end of the day, looking at your actual hormones is going to be the best way to tell if something's out of whack. You can see if that's related to weight. Lab tests are really important and your genetics is really important. I think it's really important for everything because it is something that is very deeply embedded into our health, in terms of genetics and lab tests.

Joe Cohen: The key is to understand what are the core things that are causing issues, whether it's gaining weight or whatever it is. What are the core things that are causing the issue and how you can counteract it? I could give one example that I think your audience would be interested in, in terms of genetics. I actually don't have a big problem with heavy metals. I didn't know that until I was eating a lot of fish. I was really pounding fish. I was eating like two pounds of fish a day.

Joe Cohen: We know that fish has a lot of heavy metals. I started to get brain fog and other issues. I realized it could be from fish and thought I was eating too much fish. I also wanted to know what was the root cause of this brain fog that I was getting from fish. I assumed that it was from heavy metals. Mercury, especially, but it has other heavy metals as well.

Joe Cohen: I took a whole bunch of things that caused mercury detox like NAC, glutathione, lipoic acid and some chelators that are specific to mercury. I didn't notice anything, good or bad. Some people are sensitive to heavy metals. They can notice bad side effects because it's chelating it and it's moving around the body. Some people can notice good effects in the sense that they're chelating these heavy metals and it's not harming them, as a result.

Joe Cohen: For me, it was the most natural thing to try that out, but it didn't help me at all. I didn't notice any difference in terms of the brain fog I was getting after eating fish. It helped me realize that when I ate fish once, I may have some brain fog, but I didn't really notice that acutely. Only when I ate fish almost every day for two weeks, I noticed that I was losing my memory. It's like my brain was elapsing. I'm losing my memory and I'm forgetting things. It's really weird.

Joe Cohen: This was actually independent of the other health issues that I had previously had. This happened a year or two ago when I was completely healthy. I couldn't understand what was happening with my brain fog. I have this genetic company, lab tests and the SelfDecode lab test analyzer. The first thing I wanted to check were some genes related to detoxing. I noticed that I had two genes that were not working well. One was the NRF2 and one was the PAN1.

Joe Cohen: It turns out that the PAN1 is what detoxes plastics. We also know that the oceans are contaminated with plastics up the wazoo. Our ocean is filled with plastics and they become microplastics. Then the fish eat them. Even if you're eating clean fish, you are still getting these plastics. Even in wild Alaskan salmon, you are getting these dioxins. After the fish eat them, they break down into dioxins and other kinds of toxins that are found in plastics like phthalates, dioxins and BPA.

Joe Cohen: I was getting brain fog from fish and I know I have this gene that's not detoxing well, PAN1. I looked at some of the recommendations. I started thinking about what can detox plastics or toxins? It turns out that activated charcoal works very well for it. I've taken activated charcoal before but I didn't notice any beneficial effect when I took it, in my experiments. You kind of drop it off, right? When I took activated charcoal when I was in that brain fog state, it completely took away the brain fog. It was very acute.

Joe Cohen: Ever since then, I always take activated charcoal after eating fish and I don't get brain fog from eating fish. It's just something I do. After that, I completely stayed away from plastics in terms of water bottles and things like that. If I do drink

from a water bottle, I won't notice any negative effects from it right away. But I do know now that I'm sensitive to these plastic toxins and the way to counteract that is actually with activated charcoal. I didn't stop eating fish but I did take the activated charcoal and it basically counteracted the negative effects from my PAN1 gene and the NRF2 as well.

Joe Cohen: The NRF2 detoxes the plastics, and so does the PAN1. The activated charcoal completely counteracted that. That's an example of how knowing your genes can really help you. Even though I was at the peak of my health and had no issues, all of a sudden something came along. What is going on with this brain fog? This is not like the other kinds of brain fog I had in the past that were related to other things. It wasn't related to inflammation per se. It was some toxin that I was ingesting. That was very important for me.

Joe Cohen: I always like looking at my genes. Genes and also my lab tests. They're really something that doesn't get old. You really want to understand the blueprint of your body and understand what are the most important genes that are giving you an issue. If your main issue is weight, then you want to know what are the most important weight genes that are causing you to gain weight. Each of those genes has their own unique recommendations.

Joe Cohen: What we do is we put them in a report that prioritizes these recommendations, based on our algorithm. You're able to look at those prioritized recommendations in our reports. You're also able to look at the personalized blog posts that dive deeper into each gene. You're able to learn which genes are increasing your risk. Genetics is not at a point where we can predict extremely accurately how much you're going to weigh.

Joe Cohen: The reason is because we don't know your lifestyle and you could be counteracting the negative effects of those genes. It's not the best thing to know to predict exactly what is going on. If someone is overweight and they want to lose weight then we know that the person has an issue and we know that genetics is contributing to it. Especially if they're trying standard ways to lose weight and they needed to do something different. There has to be a unique approach if somebody is trying to lose weight or if they're trying to detox, and they're not successful.

Joe Cohen: You can keep taking mercury chelators but if your NRF2 gene is not good, then the detox is not going to be as good. We're living in a world where there's more toxins in the system than we've been evolved to handle, especially a spectrum of the population. You look at SNPs, these single variants in your genome. These are the most popular types of genetic variants within a bell curve, in the population. Some of them can be more common or less common. Some of them could only be 1% of the population while others could be 80% of the population that have it, or something like that.

Joe Cohen: There's a spectrum in the population and each person is somewhere along that spectrum. When you combine all your genetics together, you're somewhere along that spectrum for your tendency to gain weight or your tendency to lose weight or your tendency to detox well. You have people who naturally handle toxins well, because it's just a variation in the population. Every trait has some bell curve and you're on there somewhere where your genetics are either less advantageous compared to the rest of the population or they're more. They're also other factors like interacting with your environment and different toxins, as well.

Joe Cohen: I'm not susceptible to mercury that much, right now that I can tell, but I'm more susceptible to plastics. I could be less susceptible to mercury in comparison to the population and I could be more susceptible to plastics. If you're exposed to large amounts of these toxins, it's going to show in some way. It could be any kind of symptoms. It doesn't have to be brain fog. It could be something else like lower energy or weight gain. You really need to look at your genes and try to figure out which are the ones that are contributing to your issues.

Wendy Myers: I like that you said that. Some people have a better ability to detox than others. We all know some people that are drinking and smoking until they're 100 years old, but that's probably not you. It's a good idea to find out your blueprint. It's amazing that so many people have not had their genetics done. I strongly urge people to do this. When I did my genetics, I did 23andMe a long time ago. You can now plug that into various apps and get the information.

Wendy Myers: I found that I definitely had genes for diabetes. I really have to watch my sugar and carbohydrate intake. My genes for thyroid are a mess, my genes for liver are a mess. I'm much more careful about taking care of my liver, doing coffee enemas, liver support, supplements and things like that because I know my body's weaknesses and my blueprints. It helps drive my behavior and my decisions when it comes to my health. I love that you have your own platform for helping people with their genetics. Can you tell us about that?

Joe Cohen: In this platform, you can either buy a kit or upload an existing kit that you've already bought like 23andMe, or Ancestry or any other company, really. You upload it and you get access to a whole suite of tools and reports that are deep dives on given topics. Some of the ones that I think your audience would be interested in are thyroid and weight. We don't have a report on detox but we have some articles on that, personalized articles.

Joe Cohen: The reports are good for prioritizing recommendations and giving you some overviews. Then the individual blog posts are really good because they're personalized. The content changes based on your genetics. It's really good to identify which genes are problematic. Then you can look at all the recommendations that are related to it.

Joe Cohen: Let's say, if you're prone to diabetes, it actually gets more granular than just staying away from sugar, right? You might do relatively better with fiber than other people. You might do better with this kind of diet or that kind of diet. It gives you ideas for a healthy lifestyle that is counteracting these genes. Ones that maybe you haven't tried before. It could be a good thing for you to try out, especially because these genes are increasing your risk. These recommendations are counteracting those genes.

Wendy Myers: When someone does this test, can they do the genetic test with you directly or do they need to do 23andMe or ancestry.com first, and then run it through your application?

Joe Cohen: They can do it directly with us and we provide it as a service, to make it more seamless for the customers, so that they don't have to use two different services. Our chip is also better than 23andMe in terms of the SNP coverage, the number of SNPs. We also don't sell people's data, which is basically the business model for 23andMe. A lot of people are concerned about that. For those reasons, we offer our own chip. It is not really to make money from it because selling genetic kits is not a money making business, but we do charge the same amount as 23andMe.

Joe Cohen: We're not making a profit off of it. It's really just as a service to people. So, they can do their own thing which is fine with us, or they can do it with us and they can get the benefits that I mentioned. In addition, you can also upload your labs to that same platform. What we're doing is we're making a very comprehensive platform.

Joe Cohen: It includes the really deep dive. You can go through genetics in a bunch of different ways. It also allows you to go through your lab tests. Before we had separate companies, SelfDecode for the genetics lab test analyzer and for the genetic lab test, and then SelfHacked for the content. What we realized is people want all of them together. They want one platform that can give them everything in one. We combined the lab test analyzer with SelfDecode so that you can get both of those. We have also combined SelfHacked now.

Joe Cohen: What we've done is, we have to create our own ecosystem. We brought in SelfHacked so you get this database of content that is exclusive to our members. With the lab analyzer, with the genetics, we're building out a whole suite of tools that allows you to really improve your health on an individualized basis. Whether that's alternative medicine, medical doctors or functional doctors, they love SelfHacked. Whether they love SelfDecode and lab analyzer. Whether it's with the help of a professional or not, when you're using these tools, you can really get helped by them.

Wendy Myers: I like that you brought up that 23andMe sells the information, or actually sells the data to pharmaceutical companies. A lot of people are really put off by that.

I've had a number of people I know that don't want to get their genetics done because they're scared of their information being used in some way against them, in the future. What do you say to that versus your platform?

Joe Cohen: I'm in agreement. As far as we're concerned, we're not interested in partnering with pharmaceuticals. That's just not what we're about. Even from a business sense, it wouldn't make sense. You have to have millions of people's genetics in order to even think about that. 23andMe has like 15 million genetic files from people. They have a business case for it and they were created to do that. We were created to be different from 23AndMe and not go down that route. That's why we have a very different product.

Joe Cohen: We focus on the recommendations. We focus on natural recommendations, not pharmaceutical recommendations. We focus on optimizing health, getting to the root cause of the problems and looking at which genes are problematic. Whereas with 23andMe, their whole business model is how can we get more pharmaceuticals out there? How can we sell more people's data? They subsidize people's data in order to get more data to sell to the pharmaceuticals. It's not what we're about and it just does not fit into our business model at all.

Joe Cohen: We have more of a community of subscribers who like our whole ecosystem. When they get their lab test done they can check it and their genetics, the information is always evolving. We're always releasing new reports and new personalized blog posts. It's a very different model than 23andMe. We got out of the Google model because we don't want to be a shell for Google and be like, is Google going to approve of this or not?

Joe Cohen: It's very easy to go down that route but we don't want to do that because that's just not what we're about. We have to have our own ecosystem where the customers are subscribers and we do everything for the customer. We give them our goals, we give them the best recommendations in order to improve their health. We are not affiliated with a pharmaceutical company.

Wendy Myers: If you guys want to try it and get your genetics done, which I highly, highly recommend, go to get.selfdecode.com/wendy. You guys can go there and get a special discount just for my listeners. You can also use the coupon code, Myers Detox, as well, on that page. Do we get certain types of recommendations or reports for supplements based on our genes? A diet based on our genes? What can people expect?

Joe Cohen: When you download a report, it prioritizes the recommendations based on your genetics and what you should be implementing first. Let's say if you're trying to lose weight, you want to go with the top five recommendations and then start implementing those and see how they're impacting you. Then you could keep going down that list and see what it is that also fits in with your body. We can't look at everything possible, in every issue.

Joe Cohen: It's really focused on a single issue. The individual or their practitioner might say, "Maybe I'll skip recommendation three because of some other thing that is going on". Essentially, you want to look at the top recommendations and you want to implement them. You also want to look at the personalized blog. We break it down by topics. You want to look at the genes that are increasing your risk the most.

Joe Cohen: I can share my screen. Do your listeners see the video? If they're seeing the video, they can see that this breaks it down. I click on a category like weight, detox or thyroid, and it breaks down the genes that are increasing my risk of weight gain. There's a leptin gene here that is increasing my risk. There's some cytokines. These are uncoupling proteins that are related to fat burning. This one is related to the circadian rhythm, the clock gene.

Joe Cohen: UCP1 is related to weight gain. We have about 55 genes in this weight category. It basically shows you what are the top genes that are increasing the risk. Then you can click on it and then see the recommendations. You can read about the gene and look at the SNPs involved. You can look at your score. Every gene has a scorecard telling you if it's increasing your risk. Then it gives you a personalized genetic summary and some personalized recommendations based on that gene.

Joe Cohen: In this case, FAIM2, it turns out that having too much saturated fat can increase weight gain as a result of this gene. This is an individual gene but the report is good because it takes into account all of your genes related to weight.

Wendy Myers: That's fantastic. That's very clear because I've gotten my 23andMe genes and run them through different apps. That's very well laid out, very clear and very easy to understand. I really like it just for that reason. It's amazing to know what you're working with because a lot of people are doing guesswork. A lot of people are following certain people and then doing the diet that worked for that person, which is not necessarily going to work for you. A lot of people fall into these traps where they know they need to detox, but they're not doing it as a specialized detox that's individualized for them.

Wendy Myers: People struggle and they flounder around. They try different things. All the while, they'd be having much more bang for their buck and their time if they knew what they were working with, for themselves individually. It's just amazing to me, like I said, that there are so many doctors and practitioners not looking at genetics. They're just flying blind, basically. There isn't any excuse in today's day and age, to be doing that when you're working with patients.

Joe Cohen: I agree 100%. As time goes on, we get more and more knowledge of the genes and what we can do about them. There really isn't an excuse, if a doctor is not using your genetics. Like you said, they're flying blind. It's like trying to do rehabilitation for a building and you don't know the blueprint of that building. There might be a specific room that you want to fix up because it's having

problems, like a leak, and you want to look at the blueprint of the building and see where the pipes are located. What is causing the issues in this particular room or this particular problem?

Joe Cohen: You also want to make sure that you're looking at the labs, as well. You can't really do that without software to see which are the labs that are out of the optimal range and what there is to do about each lab. It would take too much time. If a doctor is not using these kinds of tools, then they're not really taking into account these variables that can be very important.

Wendy Myers: I want to work with a medical doctor. I've only seen one doctor in my entire life that used software to make recommendations. It's really sad when there's so many tools available. I have only met one doctor that was looking at medication interactions. I think a lot of doctors make recommendations and they're not double checking things. It blows my mind. For me, I don't go to doctors. When I have, in the past, it was really important for me that they were using software, if they're making any recommendation for me. I recommend running for the hills if your doctor is not using software.

Joe Cohen: Doctors are able to use our software. We have plans for them. There's no excuse not to use it.

Wendy Myers: Yes..

Joe Cohen: I agree. I personally wouldn't go to a doctor that wasn't using software to look at labs or genetics or these kinds of things. They're really flying blind.

Wendy Myers: When you're looking at the different labs, the lab ranges, it's all of the sick people that were coming in. These lab ranges are created as an average of all the ill people coming in and doing their lab work. That's not the range you're wanting to look at, or aiming to be in.

Joe Cohen: Correct. I think we all have had situations where you go to a doctor and they'll just say, "All your labs are fine". What they're really saying is that we can't diagnose you with an official disease right now. Sometimes you might have a condition and they still don't even diagnose you because they really want to see it clearly in your lab results. Other times, you might not have a condition. I didn't know that my thyroid hormones were low and I wouldn't have known that without using software that has a whole research team behind it, researching what are the optimal levels. What could be lowering it? What can I do to increase it and show me?

Joe Cohen: Doctors will often only test TSH. It's a very kind of rigid system. This is why alternative doctors are better in a lot of ways, because they already understand that you have got to also check for the T3, total and free T3. My levels were very low and doctors weren't saying that. They were saying, "Everything's fine, you

don't have any issues". I knew I didn't feel good then, and now I do feel good, so obviously I did have an issue. My T3 was not in the optimal range. The lab analyzer would pick that up but doctors would not. You might have hormones out of range and doctors will not mention anything unless it's really, really out of range.

Wendy Myers: It's so important, SelfHacked, and taking responsibility for your healthcare into your own hands. Research what all this means and what your labs mean, because doctors are typically going to spend five minutes with you and not explain stuff. If there's not a medication for it, they may not bring it up. When there are actually some kind of lifestyle, diet and detox things that you can do to get that lab in an optimal range. That's what's great about your platform, you give a lot of different recommendations like diet, lifestyle, et cetera. This is based on your lab work, so that you don't have to do that guesswork.

Joe Cohen: I think that you brought up a really important point, that the main thing we're trying to do is empower people to take charge of their health. Whether you want to use a doctor to help you out or not, that's a personal choice, but the individual should be empowered. That's why I went down this whole route, because I was not empowered. I didn't have the right content. I didn't have the right tools to analyze my genetics or lab tests.

Joe Cohen: I literally had to make it my full time job. I'm a pretty smart guy. I was reading thousands and thousands of studies. Why should I have to read thousands and thousands of studies in order to improve my health? There's obviously something wrong here. We're living in a time where we decoded the genome in 2003. Since then, there's just been an avalanche of studies and a whole bunch of things have progressed.

Joe Cohen: We have so much science. If you look at the science, you'll see, so much of it is just from the past 15 years. They really did genetic research starting from about 15 years ago. It keeps on coming out but why are we not using it? The world literally spent many hundreds of billions of dollars figuring out what all these things mean, and nobody uses it for healthcare. Conventional medicine doesn't and even bad genes like APOE4 or BRCA, it's just not part of the medical system.

Joe Cohen: We actually have reports on those genes like APOE4, APOE, BRCA, MTHFR and TP53. These are quite important genes. Also COMT and other genes as well. Essentially they're really not taking into account genes when they're giving you any health advice. They're starting to do that in the alternative world, but I don't think they're adopting it quickly enough because there's some complexities involved. It does require you to read things. It's there, it's not super hard.

Joe Cohen: We're making it a hundred times easier so you don't have to look up thousands of studies in genetics, and look up each individual gene. With the software, we're already putting all the content there. We're organizing it for you so that

you can instantly pick out the top 10 genes that are increasing your weight or worsening your thyroid health. You have all the information there. You've got all the recommendations there. You have the reports that you can download, that give you prioritized recommendations.

Joe Cohen: Then you have the lab tests that you can take, that will also give you insight. You can read about it on SelfHacked, which is a resource that only existed in the past few years to the extent that it has. We have a huge database of around 1500 really comprehensive posts, on a variety of topics. All this research wasn't around 20 years ago.

Joe Cohen: If you went to PubMed and looked up curcumin or something, you wouldn't really see anything. It would be very sparse. It was not all our information. We're now having a lot of information and it's really important that it's put together in a much more simple way so you don't have to read 10,000 studies like I did, or make it your full time job just to be healthy. That would have been something you needed to do in 2010, to be honest. This is when I had these issues and I was doing that.

Joe Cohen: I felt that other people cannot do this. They have families, they have kids and they have full time jobs. I literally had to drop out of school and quit my job to focus 100% of my time into reading about genetics, lab tests and all these things. If it were now, it'd be way, way easier. I would just upload my labs and see what are the top lab tests that are not optimal. What are the top genes for a given issue that's not optimal? I could spend a couple hours really figuring these things out. Then, over time, you could read an article here or there and really get to the root cause of your issue.

Wendy Myers: That's really where the future of medicine is going, this individualized medicine based on genetics. It's here right now and you can do it. The sad thing that research has shown is that conventional medical doctors are 15 to 17 years behind the research. That's why they're not using genetics and other things in their recommendations, which can be deadly. I know so many people that have almost died from their medications or from a surgery that they didn't need to have, that could have been addressed naturally.

Wendy Myers: The number three way that people die is medical mistakes. You really have to be careful. For me and my personality, I second guess. Why do I need that medication? Is there a natural alternative? Is there something else that I can do? Is there a natural lifestyle change or a diet change that I could be making to improve my condition? You're not going to get that from your doctor. For me, you don't ever want to leave your health decisions in the hands of one person who is, naturally as a human being, going to have a limited knowledge set or limited toolkit. You want to be talking to a number of consultants and questioning everything.

Joe Cohen: That's a really good point what you said about doctors being 17 years behind. If you really think about it, it makes sense. No doctors are using genetics right now. They're starting in the alternative world, but in the conventional sphere, there are no doctors using genetics. That would have been fine 17 years ago. It takes a really long time, for a few reasons. One is just because the system that we have requires a very high threshold of evidence in order to recommend something. Basically they say no natural product can do it, only the pharmaceutical companies, right?

Joe Cohen: If we got this slight benefit for this condition and we spent billions of dollars to figure that out, you're not going to have that with natural stuff, right? It's not going to be a billion dollars spent to see whether exercise helps with a specific condition. Even with diet, that's why you have this whole mess of dietary advice and everybody has a different opinion, because they've never spent billions of dollars of research on each aspect. How does diet help this condition? Has it helped this condition?

Joe Cohen: We just have these epidemiological studies which are useful but don't give you very clear answers. All these studies weren't taking into account genetics. You have different people reacting to different things and it's just a mess. Some people can lose weight on saturated fat and some people gain weight. Is saturated fat bad for you or not? Well, it depends on the individual, right? What level of saturated fat do you need and things like that?

Joe Cohen: Number one is, it really takes a long time to get it into medical school curriculum because it needs this kind of research for each individual thing, like a drug is approved for one particular condition, not for like a hundred. In order to approve a diet for something, you would need to spend billions of dollars for each condition. Over time, they have enough epidemiological studies to know that if you eat healthy in some kind of general sense, if you do some general healthy things like stop smoking, you'll be healthier. That's what they're going to recommend. Just don't smoke, exercise and eat healthy.

Joe Cohen: What does healthy mean? It's anyone's guess, but just eat healthy, right? By the time it gets into medical schools, it's one thing. It's really not going to get into the medical establishment. I think it's even longer than 17 years. We have tens of thousands of studies on genetics done. We have tons of information in science, just none of it is being taught in medical schools and doctors don't know about it.

Joe Cohen: Alternative medicine is more likely to adopt these things quicker because they don't have to see a billion dollars spent on something, to know that it works. They'll get feedback from their patients. They'll see something that works with their patients. They're also starting to use genetics and lab tests to see more in depth, but I think it's definitely the future.

Joe Cohen: When it comes to content, the content that we produce now is all personalized. We already have the personalized blog set-ups. All the content that we produce could be very highly individualized to you, as an individual, rather than giving you some generic content and saying, "Oh, this has been found to work in one small study" or something like that. So check this out based on your individual genes.

Wendy Myers: What are some changes that you made? You did your genetics and what kind of lifestyle changes or diet and exercise, et cetera, did you make once you discovered your genetics?

Joe Cohen: It's been a long journey, it wasn't like I just got my genetics partly because I was developing the software, over time. When I started doing it, it was reading research papers and comparing by doing a Ctrl F on my SNP file and seeing if I had this variation. The way I was doing it is kind of like reading bits of computer code and trying to figure out what the software is saying.

Joe Cohen: Whereas, now what we have is like an operating system like Mac or Windows, that allows you to navigate your body. What you should do much more conveniently than ones and zeros, which is really what computer code is, just ones and zeros. They're working based off of existing architecture and infrastructure, but it all comes down to ones and zeros.

Joe Cohen: Over time, I gained a lot more information. I'll get a good tip here, I'll get a good tip there. I realized that a lot of my food sensitivities and gut inflammation was a result of my cannabinoid 1 receptor gene. And that was very important because there's a lot of ways to strengthen the cannabinoid system in your body. My cannabinoid system was underactive and I was having a lot of problems related to that. There's things like CBD oil, very low doses of THC, and things like butyrate can help your cannabinoid system. Actually quite a lot of things can help with the cannabinoid system.

Joe Cohen: We have that on SelfHacked. We have these personalized blog posts on the CNR1 gene on SelfDecode. These were contributing to my gut inflammation and lectin sensitivity. That was a big thing for me. Then I found some genes related to the Th1 and Th17 pathways that were increasing my inflammation. That was very interesting. The PAN1 was interesting.

Joe Cohen: For me, one of the things I always like to improve is my mood. The mood report was very interesting, I saw that there were a lot of serotonin related genes that were problematic. I started to take 5-HTP as a result. It was things here and there, rather than there was one big epiphany, or something like that. It's just things that I gained over time. I'd get this good nugget as I read through posts that are about the highest risk for me, based on the facts that I get.

Joe Cohen: If I get a red, sad face, I'm looking at those posts. I'm not looking at the ones where I get a green face. I get these nuggets in the topics that I care about. Over time it's like, "Oh, that's very interesting. I should either try that or now I know what works for me". The lab results were very important for me. I cut out saturated fats because my LDL was too high. I normalized my T3. I did a lot of other things with the lab tests that normalized after uploading them, once you see which ones are suboptimal.

Joe Cohen: My ferritin was suboptimal. There were a bunch of them that were suboptimal and then I basically normalized them. That was a very good improvement. There were these things I read on SelfHacked, and it came all together. There's all the information. At the end of the day, my company is my baby but also it's helped me out quite a bit, as well.

Wendy Myers: I can concur on the cannabinoid. I cannot believe how much better I feel when I take CBD oil. I definitely know that I'm very sensitive to pain and felt like I needed my cannabinoid receptors addressed, something just wasn't optimal there. With CBD, I feel much better. Less aches and pains, better mood and better sleep. Lots of improvements.

Joe Cohen: We're coming out with the pain report.

Wendy Myers: How interesting.

Joe Cohen: We've got a pain report, thyroid, mood, weight and inflammation. You could dig down on each topic that really interests you.

Wendy Myers: Fantastic, so everyone, if you want to get your genetics done don't put it off anymore. You know that you want to know this information. Go to get.selfdecode.com/wendy and use coupon code, myersdetox. Joe, thanks for coming on the show. Any parting thoughts or anything that you want to share with the audience?

Joe Cohen: The audience can also subscribe to our email list. We have very good content there because we give exclusive content to our email list. You can go to SelfHacked and sign up for any of our bonus products or put in your email. You'll get exclusive content there. We show you how to use SelfDecode and how to improve whether you're a member or you're not a member. We still give you very interesting content about how to improve your health based on that.

Joe Cohen: We also have one which is related to respiratory infections which is relevant, especially nowadays, because COVID really affects the respiratory system. It's really important that people really understand their blueprint and the individualized tips to improve their health.

Wendy Myers: Yes, absolutely. I 100% agree with you. Joe and everyone, thanks so much for coming on the show. I love your work. I highly recommend that everyone go on get.selfdecode.com/wendy and sign up. You have an exemplary blog post in content.

Joe Cohen: Thank you so much.

Wendy Myers: Thanks for tuning in today to the *Myers Detox Podcast* where we talk about all topics related to heavy metal detoxification. You definitely need to know your genes, especially if you're having trouble detoxing. Thanks for tuning in. You can find me on myersdetox.com. We have hundreds of podcasts and hundreds of free articles. You can dig into everything on the topic of detoxification. Thanks for tuning in. I'll talk to you guys next week.