

Epigenomics

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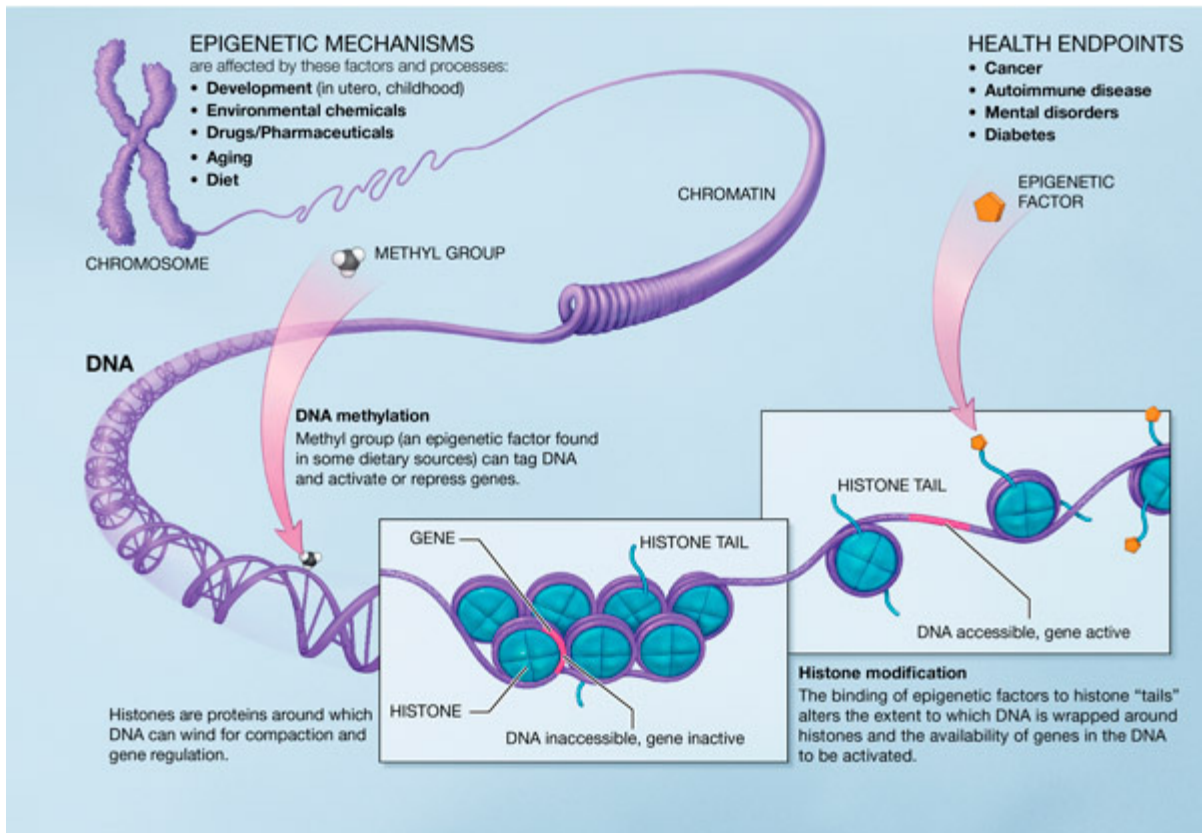
A Scientific Illustration of How Epigenetic Mechanisms Can Affect Health

Epigenetic mechanisms are affected by several factors and processes including development in utero and in childhood, environmental chemicals, drugs and pharmaceuticals, aging, and diet. DNA methylation is what occurs when methyl groups, an epigenetic factor found in some dietary sources, can tag DNA and activate or repress genes. Histones are proteins around which DNA can wind for compaction and gene regulation. Histone modification occurs when the binding of epigenetic factors to histone “tails” alters the extent to which DNA is wrapped around histones and the availability of genes in the DNA to be activated. All of these factors and processes can have an effect on people’s health and influence their health possibly resulting in cancer, autoimmune disease, mental disorders, or diabetes among other illnesses.

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