

There is Treasure in Your Family Health History

Learning about your family health history can help you and your family members to maintain good health. Follow these tips to get started!

Why collect your family health history?

- Family health histories summarize the health conditions that affect members of a family
- Family health history can give you an idea about the genetic factors and the common behaviors that are shared between family members

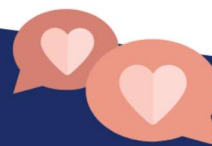


Family health history can be used to support your health care and could even save your life

1 Talk to Your Family



Write down the names of your close biological relatives from your mother and father's side of your family: parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, nieces, and nephews. You can talk to half-brothers and half-sisters too!



Some people are very comfortable talking about their health history and find it helpful. Other people may feel uncomfortable sharing their health history, so don't forget to talk about any concerns ahead of time.

Tip

Some families talk about their family health histories during family gatherings

2 Ask Questions



For each relative, ask what health conditions that person has had in their lifetime.



Start with a list of conditions for each person. Use the same list for each relative.



After you go through the list, you can talk about other health conditions that were not asked about.

Tip

Use the list of conditions in the same order for each family member

3 Go Deeper

Ask about health conditions and when they were diagnosed. Here are some ideas:

- Have you ever had heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, or high cholesterol?
- Have you ever had any of these cancers: breast, prostate, pancreatic, or colorectal?
- Have you ever dealt with depression, bipolar disorder, or tried to reduce your substance use but had a hard time?
- How old were you when each of these health conditions were diagnosed?
- Are you worried that you might get this disease?

4 Record



Record the information on your computer or on paper.



You can use a free and private web based tool called My Family Health Portrait to maintain your information.

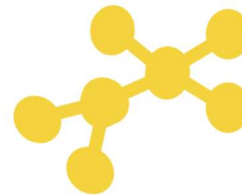


To start your own family health history visit
<https://phgkb.cdc.gov/FHH/>

Tip

It's okay if relatives don't remember everything. They can update at any time or if their health changes

5 Share



Share your family health history with your doctor and family members. You can also talk about whether you are worried about one disease or another.

Family health history, even if incomplete, can help you and your doctor decide which screening tests you need and when those tests should start.

6 Act



You can't change your family health history, but you can change your health behaviors.

You can get more information from a local health fair, trusted health websites like MedlinePlus <https://medlineplus.gov>, and your doctor

Tip

For more information visit
<https://www.cdc.gov/genomics/famhistory/>

7 Update



Update your family health history whenever you learn new family health history information



Share information with your family members and your health professionals so they can stay updated

Source:

Yoon PW, Scheuner MT, Peterson-Oehlke KL, Gwinn M, Faucett A, Khoury MJ. Can family history be used as a tool for public health and preventive medicine? *Genet Med.* 2002; 4(4): 304-310.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Awareness of family health history as a risk factor for disease--United States, 2004. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep.* 2004 Nov 12;53(44): 1044-7.