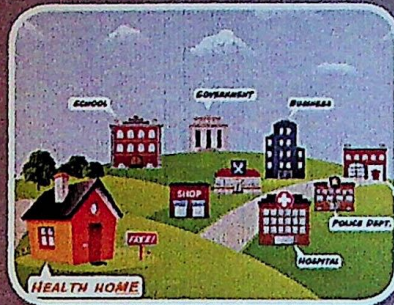
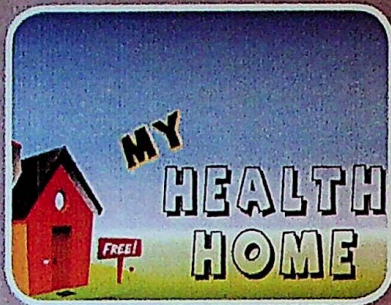


# Family Health History



The Key to Unlocking Your Family's Health History



Understanding how to gather your family health history is a major step toward taking control of your health. That's because your family's health often contains significant clues to your own health status. The Healthiest State in the Nation Campaign can help you get started.

Use the tips and the tool below to help you gather and build a record of your family's health history. Save the completed tool to your Health Vault or Google Health account, your personal computer or print it and save it with other important health information. Having easy access to your family's health history can provide insight into many of the risk factors that you may be susceptible to so that you can work to prevent them. In addition, new patient forms usually ask questions about your family's health history to help guide recommendations-use this completed tool to help you complete these forms and ensure your health care providers are fully informed about your health and your health risks.

### **Gathering Your Family Health History**

Your immediate family is most like you genetically; their health status and conditions are most relevant. If you have access to your extended family's health, include it as well.

#### A basic family health history includes:

- ✓ **Name and relationship** to you (myself, parent, child, etc.)
- ✓ **Health history** - include conditions such as heart disease, alcoholism, diabetes, depression and cancer - and the age at which the condition started
- ✓ **Age and cause of death** (if deceased)

#### A detailed family health history includes all of the above as well as:

- ✓ **Ethnicity, race, and/or origins** of family
- ✓ **Place and date of birth** (or your best guess - for example "1940s")
- ✓ **Lifestyle** (occupation, exercise, diet, habits such as smoking and regular doctor check-ups)

**COMPLETE THE FAMILY HEALTH HISTORY TOOL BELOW AND SAVE IT WHERE YOU SAVE OTHER IMPORTANT HEALTH DOCUMENTS.**

#### *Tips for gathering information about your family's health history:*

##### **Before starting the conversation:**

- ✓ Make a list of relatives you'd like to talk to
- ✓ Prepare the list of questions you'd like to ask
- ✓ Plan to take opportunities at family gatherings or holidays to ask your relatives questions.
- ✓ Plan individual conversations to get more information
- ✓ If face-to-face conversations aren't possible, call or send out a survey via mail or e-mail

##### **During the conversation:**

- ✓ Bring paper and pencil or a recorder to make sure you don't forget anything
- ✓ Explain what you are doing and why it is important (knowing your family health history can save lives!) Offer to share your results with the family (if everyone agrees)
- ✓ Ask one question at a time
- ✓ Don't forget to ask about things like difficulties with pregnancies (such as miscarriages), mental illness, or substance abuse tendencies.
- ✓ Respect your relatives feelings and honor requests for privacy
- ✓ Don't be disheartened if you can't get all of the information you would like. Some information is more beneficial than none!



