NATIONAL FAMILY HEALTH HISTORY DAY · THANKSGIVING

Around the Table

A Family Health History Kit

Your family's health story is one of the best tools you have to protect your own health. It can shape which screenings you need, and when. This kit helps you start the conversation, write down what you learn and take it to your doctor.

How to use this kit

1

Pick your moment

At the table, or one on one while cooking, washing dishes or on a walk. Start with the elders.

2

Ask and listen

Use the starters below. Fill in the Family Health Chart (page 2) and save a few stories (page 3).

3

Take it with you

Fill in page 4 and bring it to your next checkup. Share a copy with your siblings.

Conversation starters

- “ Did anyone in our family have heart trouble, high blood pressure or a stroke? How old were they?
- “ Who in the family has had diabetes, or what the elders called “sugar”?
- “ Has anyone had cancer? What kind, and how old were they when they found out?
- “ What did Grandma and Grandpa pass away from, and how old were they?
- “ Did any of the women have fibroids, very heavy periods or a hysterectomy?
- “ Is there anything that “runs in the family” that we've never really talked about?

KEEP IT GENTLE Some health stories are painful or private, and some relatives will share more in a quiet one-on-one talk. Let people pass. “I don't know” is an answer too. Write it down and keep going.

Family Health Chart

Check every box that applies. In the last column, write the age when each person was diagnosed, plus names and anything else you learn.

Family member	Heart disease or stroke	High blood pressure	Diabetes	High cholesterol	Breast or ovarian cancer	Colon cancer	Other cancer	Fibroids or endo-metriosis	Mental health	Age when diagnosed · Notes
Me	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
My mother	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
My father	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
My sisters and brothers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
My children	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Mom's mother	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Mom's father	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Dad's mother	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Dad's father	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Aunts and uncles Mom's side	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Aunts and uncles Dad's side	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	

TIP Circle any box for a relative diagnosed earlier than usual (for example, cancer before 50, or heart disease before 55 in men and 65 in women), and note when several relatives share the same condition. Health experts flag both as signs of higher family risk.

The Stories Behind Us

A family health history is more than a list of conditions. It's how we got through hard times, and the wisdom we pass down. Capture a few stories here, in the words of the person who tells them.

A health challenge someone in our family faced, and how they got through it

Told by _____ Date _____

A family recipe, remedy or tradition, and the story behind it

Told by _____ Date _____

Advice our elders want the next generation to know about staying well

Told by _____ Date _____

Tip: With permission, record the story on your phone so you keep their voice, too.

AROUND THE TABLE · STEP 3

Take It to Your Doctor

Bring this page and your Family Health Chart to your next checkup. Your provider can use them to decide which screenings you need, and when.

What I learned

Conditions that run in my family

Relatives diagnosed young, and at what age

My biggest question for my doctor

Questions to ask your provider

- [ ] Based on my family history, am I at higher risk for any conditions?
- [ ] Should I start any screenings earlier, or have them more often? (mammogram, colonoscopy, blood sugar)
- [ ] Would genetic counseling or testing make sense for me?
- [ ] Which numbers should I keep track of? (blood pressure, A1C, cholesterol)
- [ ] What changes would do the most to lower my risk?
- [ ] Can you add my family history to my medical record?

BE SURE TO MENTION IF

- A parent, brother or sister had heart disease or a stroke early: before 55 for men, before 65 for women.
- A relative was diagnosed with cancer before age 50.
- Two or more relatives on the same side share the same condition.
- Breast and ovarian cancer both show up on the same side of the family.

Keep it going. Save a copy, share it with your siblings and update it every Thanksgiving. Family health history changes as your family does.