

# Family History

*It's connected  
to your health*

*Know your history • Get Connected • Change your future!*

## Sharing your family health history can help your doctor identify:

- diseases for which you may be at increased risk.
- changes you can make to reduce your risk and your children's risk of developing disease.



*My Family Health Portrait,*  
[www.hhs.gov/familyhistory](http://www.hhs.gov/familyhistory)  
created by the U.S. Surgeon  
General's office

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## Tips for collecting family health history

- **Talk to relatives.** They may refer you to the "family historian". Often older relatives are the best source of information about family.
- **Thanksgiving Day is National Family History Day.** Take the time to talk about your family history at family gatherings.
- **Collect information on your blood relatives** (self, parents, brothers/sisters and half brothers/sisters, children, grandparents, grandchildren, aunts/uncles, nieces/nephews and cousins).  
**Include:**
  - ▼ Name and how they are related to you (half-brother, child, etc.). Include which side of the family (mom or dad).
  - ▼ Ethnic background, race and origins of family
  - ▼ Date of birth (or best guess – such as "1960's")
  - ▼ Major medical problems
  - ▼ If a person has died, their age at death and cause of death
- If you are adopted, seek family health history information through your adoptive parents or adoption agency records.
- Organize your family history using My Family Health Portrait, an online tool ([www.hhs.gov/familyhistory](http://www.hhs.gov/familyhistory)) created by the U.S. Surgeon General's office.
- Update your family history often and share it with your doctors and your family.

