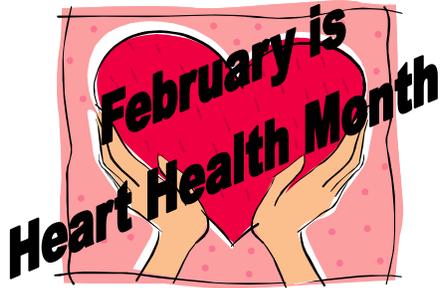


Family History and Your Health



Go Red!

Heart disease is the number one killer of women in the United States. But you can change that! February 3 is Go Red Day for Women. Show your support at home and in the workplace by wearing red on this day. The American Heart Association recommends knowing your cholesterol and blood pressure numbers and eating a heart healthy diet. Visit www.americanheart.org to learn more about women and heart disease.

Give your sweetie a heart healthy gift for *Valentine's Day!* Keep reading for some ideas!

- ◆ *Fruit bouquets:* A pretty and delicious gift!
- ◆ *2006 Michigan State Park pass:* Perfect for the outdoor lover: Find purchase information at www.michigan.gov.
- ◆ *Gym packages for two:* Make physical activity twice as nice!
- ◆ *A nice quiet dinner at home.* Find heart healthy recipes online in the American Heart Association Cookbook at www.deliciousdecisions.org/

Take heart!

Heart Disease is the number one cause of death in Michigan residents. But importantly, Coronary Heart Disease is also the most **PREVENTABLE**. There are 71 deaths per day in Michigan* due to coronary heart disease. Various factors, including lifestyle, can affect the way your heart is supposed to work.

A **family history of heart disease** is one of those risk factors that you can't control (these are called non-modifiable risk factors). However, most people with a family history of heart disease also have other risk factors that you **CAN** do something about (these are called modifiable risk factors). It is especially important for you to talk with your health care provider and be aware of the risk factors you can reduce through lifestyle changes if a relative has had a heart attack at an early age: before age 65 for a woman or before age 55 for a man,

Smoking— If you smoke, your risk of Coronary Heart Disease is 2-4 times greater than the risk for a non-smokers. To reduce your risk, keep your environment tobacco free.

Inactivity— There are many benefits to getting more physical activity in your life (including controlling blood pressure and cholesterol). Engaging in physical activity helps prevent heart and blood vessel disease. The more vigorous the activity the greater the benefits.

High cholesterol— As blood cholesterol rises, so does your risk of Coronary Heart Disease.

High Blood Pressure - Increases how hard your heart needs to work causing it to thicken and become stiff. When high blood pressure exists with other risk factors, the risk of heart attack or stroke increases several times.

Diabetes - Seriously increases your risk of developing cardiovascular disease. Uncontrolled blood sugar increases the risk even more.

*MDCH 2005 Cardiovascular Fact Sheet



For more information, please contact the Public Health Genomics Program by e-mail: genetics@michigan.gov or call toll-free: 1-866-852-1247

Michigan Department
of Community Health



Jennifer M. Granholm, Governor
Janet Olszewski, Director

Adoption and Your Family Health History



In 2004, there were approximately 2,684 finalized adoptions in Michigan.*

Adoptees may not always have access to a complete family history. Even though the complete picture may not be there, many aspects of a personal family health history would still be useful in determining your risk for disease, such as;

- ◆ Culture (certain ways of cooking)
- ◆ Behavior (does anyone smoke?)
- ◆ Lifestyle (exercise vs. couch potato?)
- ◆ Stress (for example, high stress jobs?)
- ◆ Social Support (socially active or not so much so?)
- ◆ Environment (country vs. city or exposure to secondhand smoke?)



As someone who has been adopted it may be helpful to do two family health histories. One with your adopted family to note the shared aspects mentioned above and another with as much information about your genetics as you can find, including ethnicity and country of origin. Some ethnicities have increased risks of certain conditions. The information you record would also include dates of birth, death, and cause of death if known.

In order to collect information on your biological parents, a good place to start is with the Michigan Department of Human Services adoption program. You will find information on the web at www.michigan.gov/dhs/ or call (517)373-3513.

*(http://www.michigan.gov/documents/FIA-AdoptPlacements_13094_7.pdf)

On the Web...

Michigan Department of Community Health-
Cardiovascular Section

www.michigan.gov/cvh

Heart Healthy Women

www.hearthealthywomen.org

The Heart Truth Campaign

[www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/hearttruth/material/
index.htm](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/hearttruth/material/index.htm)

Genetics Resource Center

www.MIGeneticsConnection.org

2005 CPR and ECC Guidelines

[www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier
=3011764](http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3011764)

"One faces the future with one's past"

~Pearl S. Buck

Some other Michigan resources for Adoptees:

Adoption Puzzle support group directory at
Genealogy Today

[www.genealogytoday.com/adoption/puzzle/
michigan-sg.htm](http://www.genealogytoday.com/adoption/puzzle/michigan-sg.htm)

Adoptees Search for Knowledge
[www.birthfamily.com/deitrahs/
MICHIGAN.html](http://www.birthfamily.com/deitrahs/MICHIGAN.html)

Adoptive Family Support Network
www.afsn.org/

Family History and Your Health



“My Family Health Portrait” Learning Your Family Health History is as easy as **1, 2, 3!**



- 1. Collect health information on close family members by talking at family gatherings.**
- 2. Write down your family health history and discuss it with your doctor.**
- 3. Update your family health history regularly and share it with family members.**

This November the U.S. Surgeon General is launching the second annual Family Health History day on Thanksgiving. This initiative encourages all American families to learn more about their family health history. A new and updated version of the tool, “**My Family Health Portrait**”, makes it fun and easy to create a portrait of your family’s health. It can be downloaded free and installed on your own computer. For more information, visit www.hhs.gov/familyhistory/.

A MESSAGE FROM MICHIGAN SURGEON GENERAL, DR. KIMBERLYDAWN WISDOM

While you gather with family to celebrate the holiday season, please make it a point to talk to one or more of your relatives about the health conditions that run in your family (such as diabetes, cancer, mental illness). Also talk to your doctor about your risk of developing certain conditions. Don’t leave your health or the health of your loved ones to chance. Many conditions can be prevented entirely or identified early if you know that you are at risk.



For more information, please contact the Public Health Genomics Program by e-mail: genetics@michigan.gov or call toll-free: 1-866-852-1247

Michigan Department
of Community Health



Jennifer M. Granholm, Governor
Janet Olszewski, Director

November is Diabetes Awareness Month!

Diabetes is the sixth leading cause of death in Michigan. This chronic disease caused 2,620 deaths to Michigan residents in 2003. The burden of diabetes on the health care system increases every year. Approximately 590,000 Michigan adults (18+) have been diagnosed with diabetes. Approximately 8,700 youth under the age of 18 have also been diagnosed (2002 data, Michigan Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System).



So what is diabetes? Diabetes is a disease in which the body does not produce or properly use insulin. Insulin is a hormone needed to convert sugar and starches into energy for the body. There are two common types of diabetes. Genetic factors play a role in both.

Type 1 is also known as juvenile diabetes. This is characterized by very low or no insulin production. It is an autoimmune disorder in which a person's own antibodies destroy the cells that make insulin.

Type 2 diabetes accounts for the majority of diabetes cases. It is traditionally known as an "adult" disease but is becoming increasingly common in children. Type 2 progresses slowly whereby the body does not make the required amounts of insulin or it is not used effectively.

You could be at risk for Diabetes if you.....

- * Have a parent or sibling diagnosed with diabetes
- * Are overweight
- * Get too little physical activity
- * Have high blood pressure or high cholesterol
- * Are of Native American, Hispanic or African American descent
- * Have previously been diagnosed with gestational diabetes or had a baby that weighed 9 pounds or more at birth

What can you do to lower your risk?

- * **Know your family history**— Most recent studies note that someone with a family history is at least twice as likely to develop diabetes as someone without a family history. Some studies show a four times greater risk.
- * **Move more**— Visit www.Michiganstepsup.org to find some tips on how.
- * **Lose Weight**— If you are overweight or obese, losing just 5-7% of your body weight decreases your risk of diabetes by more than 50%!
- * **Choose a healthy diet**— with 2 1/2 cups of brightly colored vegetables and 2 cups of fruit a day.
- * **Become your family's advocate**— If you are currently living with diabetes, share your health history with others in your family and encourage them to make the necessary lifestyle changes to prevent or delay diabetes.

"New evidence shows that 1 in 3 Americans born in 2000 will develop diabetes sometime during their lifetime."

-Julie Louise Gerberding, Director,
Centers for Disease Control and
Prevention

On the Web.....

Michigan Diabetes Outreach Network

www.diabetesinmichigan.org

American Diabetes Association

www.diabetes.org/home.jsp

National Diabetes Education Program

www.ndep.nih.gov/

National Kidney Foundation of Michigan

www.nkfm.org/

Genetics Resource Center

www.MIGeneticsConnection.org



Family History and Your Health

National Cholesterol Awareness Month

What is Cholesterol and What Does It Do?

High cholesterol is a risk factor for many chronic diseases, the major one being coronary artery disease (CAD). CAD is one of the most prevalent and preventable forms of heart disease. It is the leading cause of death in Michigan.

Cholesterol is essential to life. It is an important part of cell membranes and is used to make vitamins and hormones. It is made by the liver, but is also obtained through diet. Too much cholesterol can lead to a high risk for heart attack and/or stroke. Cholesterol is carried in the blood by different particles, including:

- ♥ **High-density lipoprotein (HDL),** called the “good” kind, because it helps to remove cholesterol from the body. Low levels of HDL can increase risk for CAD.
- ♥ **Low-density lipoprotein (LDL),** called the “bad” kind, because too much cholesterol and LDL in the diet can result in “clogged” arteries, also known as plaque, and can increase risk for CAD.

What is the Family Connection?

High cholesterol tends to run in families, so it is important to know your family history. Anyone with an immediate family member (parent, sibling, child) who has had high cholesterol, stroke, or heart disease, especially in a man younger than 55 or in a woman under age 65, should seek medical advice from a doctor.

KNOW YOUR NUMBERS!

The American Heart Association recommends all adults 20 years and older have a fasting lipoprotein profile (including total cholesterol, LDL, and HDL) at least every five years.

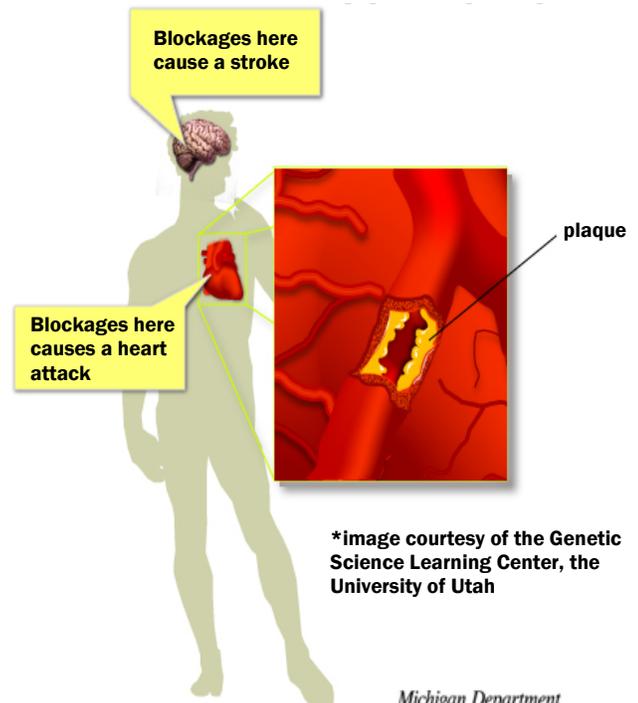
Total cholesterol:

Less than 200mg/dL.....desirable
200-239 mg/dL.....borderline high
240 mg/dL or above.....high

LDL Cholesterol level:

100mg/dL.....optimal/desirable
100-129mg/dL...near/above optimal
130-159mg/dL.....borderline high
160-189mg/dL.....high
190mg/dL or above.....very high

HDL levels should be above 40 mg/dL. 60 mg/dl is recommended to help lower your risk for heart disease.



*image courtesy of the Genetic Science Learning Center, the University of Utah

Michigan Department of Community Health



Jennifer M. Granholm, Governor
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September is National 5 A Day Month



Eat your colors!

One important way to protect your health and reduce your risk of cancer, heart disease and other chronic diseases is to eat 5 or more servings of colorful fruits and vegetables per day. Deeply colored fruits and vegetables provide a wide range of vitamins, minerals and fiber the body needs to maintain good health and energy levels. For more information on “eating your colors” and great recipes go to

www.5aday.com



2005 Dietary Guidelines

Focus on Fruits— 2 cups per day

Know the limits on fat, salt and sugars— keep your diet low in saturated fats like those found in cheese or whole milk products that tend to raise blood cholesterol, trans fats like those found in vegetable oil and shortening, salt and added sugars. Choose low fat/no fat dairy products and oils such as canola or olive oil that tend not to raise blood cholesterol and offer some protection against heart disease.

Vary your Veggies— 2– 3 cups per day

Consume Calcium rich foods— 3 cups per day

Make half your grains whole— 3 ounces per day

Go lean with protein— vary your choice and preparation methods. Bake, broil or grill instead of frying

Go to:

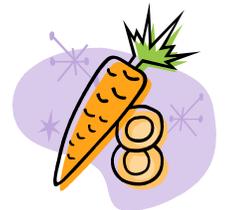
www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines/ to view

Web Resources

- www.medped.org
(information on inherited cholesterol disorders)
- www.MIGeneticsConnection.org
- www.nhlbi.nih.gov/chd/
(National Cholesterol Education Program)
- www.mypyramid.gov
(new food pyramid web site)
- www.michiganstepsup.org
(Michigan Steps Up official web site)
- www.michigan.gov/mdch/
(Click on the prevention link and go to the cardiovascular link for further information, fact sheets and the State Cardiovascular Plan)

The Michigan Department of
Community Health would like to
remind you to:

- ☺ Know Your Family History
- ☺ Know Your Numbers
- ☺ Move More, Eat Better, and Don't Smoke



The patient should be made to understand that he or she must take charge of his own life. Don't take your body to the doctor as if he (the doctor's office) were a repair shop.

~Quentin Regestein

Family History and Your Health

To What Degree?

People find it difficult when they start talking about their relationships to family members. What degree the relative is in relationship to you is important because the closer the relative is, the greater is your risk. The following information will help clear up some of these terms. It helps to think of relatives in steps:

First degree relatives — are one step away from you. They include parents, children or siblings.

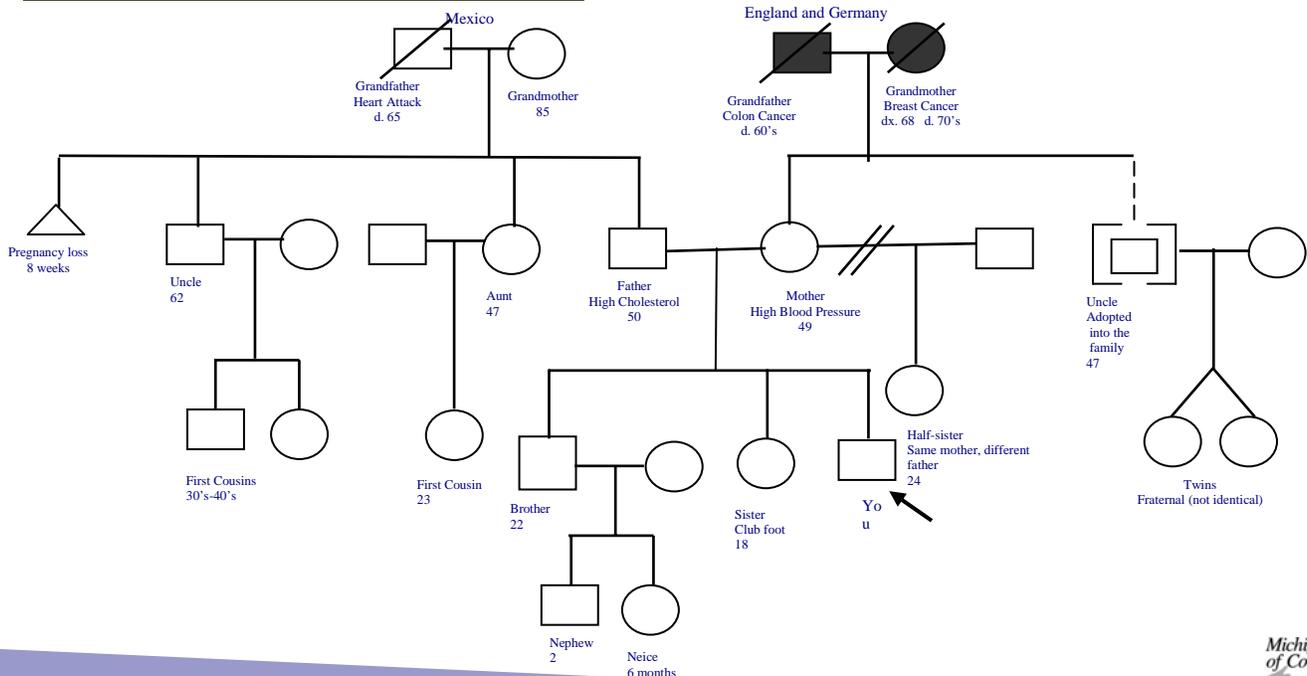
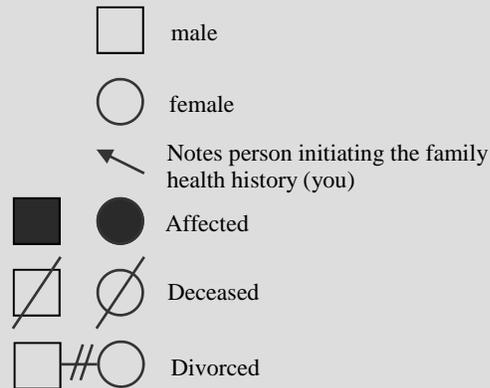
Second degree relatives — are two steps away from you. They include half-siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles and grandchildren.

Third degree relatives — are three steps away from you and include first cousins.

A Picture is Worth..... YOUR HEALTH!

Family health histories are often better understood when they are drawn out as a pedigree (or family tree). Diagrams are more easily referenced and relationships are much clearer in a “picture”. Below are the standard symbols used in a pedigree along with a sample family health history to help you get started.

Standardized Pedigree Symbols and Relationships



Words to Know

Passive Smoke - Also called secondhand smoke, is smoke in the environment someone is exposed to involuntarily. There are two kinds:

- 1) **Side stream** - smoke released from burning tobacco, such as the end of a cigarette,
- 2) **Main stream** - smoke exhaled by a person who smokes.

Affected - The individual diagnosed with a condition.

Questions to ask

1. Has anyone in your family been diagnosed with lung cancer?
2. What is their relationship to you?
3. At what age were they diagnosed?
4. Did they smoke? How much/how long?

World No Tobacco Day

May 31



For more information visit the World No Tobacco Day web site listed below.

Resources

www.MIGeneticsConnection.org

www.lungusa.org (American Lung Association)

www.wntd.org (World No Tobacco Day)

Quitting isn't easy. For help in quitting smoking contact the numbers below and keep trying!

1-800-480-7848 - Michigan Tobacco Quit Line

1-800-557-5666—For a FREE Smoker's Quit Kit, Expectant Mother's Quit Kit, and Smoking Around Children brochure



Spotlight on: Lung Cancer

5,680 Michigan residents died from lung cancer in 2003¹. Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths in both men and women across the United States with 172,570 new cases and 163,510 deaths estimated in 2005 (American Cancer Society). Lung cancer is very difficult to diagnose early as there are no symptoms initially in the disease. If it is found early on, it is usually because the individual went to their health care provider for other concerns. There are several factors that increase your risk for getting lung cancer.

- ⇒ **SMOKING (stopping smoking can reduce your risk of lung cancer by as much as 50%)**
- ⇒ **A family history of lung cancer**
- ⇒ **A diet low in fruits and vegetables**
- ⇒ **Certain environmental hazards such as asbestos and radon**
- ⇒ **Air pollution**

About 80-90% of all lung cancers are due to smoking. Stopping smoking is the best thing you can do to lower your risk. But, recent research has shown that 10% of lung cancers are in non-smokers, indicating there are other factors, including genetics, that are involved. Research also shows lung cancer can run in families.

A First Hand Look at Secondhand Smoke

Children with one or two parents who smoke are more likely to become smokers themselves. And even if they don't become smokers, a child or non-smoking spouse's risk of getting lung cancer increases by 24% due to exposure to passive smoke². Passive smoke also leads to an increase in acute and chronic middle ear infections and asthma in children.

Protect yourself and your family!

References:

¹ 1985-2003 Michigan Resident Death Files, Vital Records, Michigan Department of Community Health

² Action on Smoking and Health, www.ash.org.uk

“Genes draw your roadmap, but you still chart your course.....”

**-Jane E. Brody, New York Times,
Feb. 25, 2002**



Family History and Your Health

March is

Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

Colorectal cancer, including cancer of the bowel and rectum, is the second leading cause of cancer related death in the United States. In 2002, nearly 2000 Michigan citizens died from colorectal cancer. It is projected that there will be 56,290 deaths in the U.S. from colorectal cancer in 2005 (American Cancer Society). Because there is a link between family history and colorectal cancer, knowing your family history of the disease is important. Even if you have a family history of colorectal cancer, you may be able to prevent the disease with early screening. For more information on colorectal cancer go to www.cancer.org.

Words to Know

Genes— The basic unit of hereditary information that is the physical basis for transmitting characteristics from one living being to another.

Genetics—The study of the way traits are passed down from one generation to another.

Genomics— The study of all the genes and how they interact with each other and the environment.

Chronic Disease—A disease that lasts a long time or recurs often.



Back to the Basics

Advances in genetics are happening at such a rapid rate that it is hard to keep up with all of them. In spite of all this science and discovery, one of the best tools to assess risk for a disease is still picking up a piece of paper and a pencil and recording your family health history.

What does your family have to do with your health?

- ◆ Family members share genes, behaviors, lifestyles, ethnicity, traditions, cultures, religions, social supports, stress and environment. A person's family health history reflects the outcomes of all these influences. The family health history also holds important clues to current and future health risks.

So where do you start?

- ◆ Start today with your immediate family's health history. The active participation and cooperation of your family is essential to collecting accurate information. Possible places to gather information are: family reunions, holiday celebrations, graduations, weddings, vacations or other family parties. Other places to look for information are baby books, family bibles, military records, old letters, obituaries or death certificates. Sharing medical information may not be very easy for some people, so respect for those who do not wish to share is important. Your family member may have important reasons for not wanting to share that information.



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M DCH

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What do I do with all this information?

If you identify family members with a chronic disease there are three key points to remember:

1. What is their relationship to you?
2. What was their age of onset (when the disease began)? Did the disease appear at a typical age or occur earlier than expected?
3. How many other family members have the same condition?

Take this information to your doctor at your next visit. Your doctor may consider other disease risk factors and recommend screening and lifestyle changes based on the information you give him/her. Remember to keep your family history updated and pass it on to your children. They will thank you for it!

What is Early Onset?

The age at which your relative was diagnosed with disease is an important factor when assessing your risk. If the onset of the disease occurred at a younger age than usual it increases your risk. When preparing your family history it is important to note the current age of your affected family member. The age when a disease was diagnosed and the age of death are also important. The following is a guideline for what may be considered "early onset" when compiling your family history:

- Breast Cancer.....before age 50**
- Colon Cancerbefore age 50**
- Prostate Cancer.....before age 60**
- Stroke.....before age 60**
- Heart Disease.....before age 55 for men
before age 65 for women**
- Kidney Disease.....before age 50**
- Dementia.....before age 60**
- High Blood Pressure.....before age 40**
- Blood Clots in legs/lungs.....before age 40**
- Sudden Unexplained Deathbefore age 40**



Some other clues to look for in your family history that may increase your risk include:

- ◇ The same disease in more than one close relative
- ◇ Diseases that do not usually affect a certain gender (for example, breast cancer in a male)
- ◇ Certain combinations of diseases running in a family (for example breast and ovarian cancer, or heart disease and diabetes).

Let's Go Surfing!!

www.MIGeneticsConnection.org

www.hhs.gov/familyhistory

www.nci.nih.gov/cancertopics/prevention-genetics-causes/colon-and-rectal

<http://www.cancerindex.org/clinks2b.htm>

For more reading ideas on Family History and Genetic Conditions visit:
www.nsgc.org/resources/amazon_books.asp



Family faces are magic mirrors.
Looking at
people who belong to us, we see
the past, present, and future.
— Gail Lumet Buckley

For more information, please contact
the Public Health Genomics Program by
e-mail : genetics@michigan.gov or call
toll-free: 1-866-852-1247

Michigan Department of Community Health
November 2004 - Vol. 1, No. 1



Thanksgiving is Family History Day !

Thanksgiving 2004 will mark the first annual National Family History Day. Thanksgiving is a time when families often gather together to celebrate the traditional start of the holiday season. Family gatherings are a good time to talk with relatives about medical histories. "My Family Health Portrait" provides a way to record this important information. Remember to update the information on a routine basis- perhaps at Thanksgiving every year! Please share this information with your health care provider and entire family.

What is a Family Health History?

Family health history refers to health information about you and your close relatives. Family history is an important risk factor for chronic diseases, like heart disease, diabetes, stroke, some cancers, and other conditions that may run in families.

Family History and Your Health

US Surgeon General Launches Family Health History Campaign

United States Surgeon General Dr. Richard H. Carmona has launched a national initiative to encourage ALL Americans to learn more about their family health history. By tracing the illnesses of your parents, siblings, grandparents, and other blood relatives, the family health history can help predict chronic diseases for which you and your family may be at risk. Your doctor can help you plan your care to include screening and prevention measures based on the information you collect.



A new tool has been developed to help collect and organize your family health information, called "My Family Health Portrait". It can help identify common diseases that may run in your family. Copies are available in English and Spanish. The website also includes common questions and answers about the importance of family history. This tool can be downloaded and installed on your home computer from <http://www.hhs.gov/familyhistory>. Printed copies are also available.

To order by phone call 1-888-8-PUEBLO and ask for "My Family Health Portrait". Specify #645M-English or #808M- Spanish. To order by mail, write to:

My Family Health Portrait
Pueblo, CO 81009

In addition to the Office of the U. S. Surgeon General, other Health & Human Services agencies involved in this initiative include the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

A Special Message from Michigan Surgeon General, Dr. Kimberlydawn Wisdom

Taking care of ourselves by eating well and being physically active is important for everyone. But for some of us, it's even more important. If you have a family history of heart disease, diabetes, stroke, high cholesterol, or high blood pressure, something as simple as brisk walking 30 minutes a day and following a healthy low fat diet could prevent you from ever getting the condition or delay your getting it.

Please, make it a point this holiday season to talk to one or more of your relatives about the health issues that run in your family then, talk to your doctor about these issues also. Don't leave your health to chance. Make health your choice! For ideas and help on moving more, eating better and not smoking, look for the new Michigan Steps Up website, coming soon to www.michiganstepsup.org



Suggested Reading



Your Genetic Destiny: Know Your Genes, Secure Your Health, Save Your Life by Aubrey Milunsky

Is It In Your Genes? The Influence of Genes on Common Disorders and Diseases That Affect You and Your Family by Philip R. Reilly

The Practical Guide to the Genetic Family History by Robin L. Bennett

For more reading ideas on family history and genetic conditions, visit www.nsgc.org/resources/amazon_books.asp

What health conditions are important to collect and record?

Of the ten leading causes of death in Michigan, at least nine would be important to collect and record in your family health history. These include heart disease, cancer, stroke, lung disease, diabetes, Alzheimer's, kidney disease, and serious infections like pneumonia. It is important for family members to share information about these and other health conditions with each other. The list of other possible conditions is very long, and includes high blood pressure, asthma/allergies, mental illness, seizures/epilepsy, blood disorders, osteoporosis, sudden unexplained deaths, birth defects, developmental delay, muscular disorders, early childhood deaths, stillbirths, two or more miscarriages, or known genetic syndromes. A record of habits such as smoking, heavy alcohol use, poor diet, and substance abuse can also be helpful.

Food for Thought

How important do you think knowledge of your family's health history is to your personal health?



at Thanksgiving

Have you ever actively collected health information from your relatives for purposes of developing a family health history?

According to a recent survey*, most people know that family history is important to health. While 96% of Americans believe knowing their family history is important, only **one-third** have tried to gather and write it down. Let's try to increase the number of Americans who have collected their family health history! Please start to gather your family health history this holiday season.

The State of Michigan will also have a chance to respond to these two questions. In 2005, a phone survey, called the Behavioral Risk Factor Survey (BRFS), will ask these two questions of 4000 Michigan households. Stay tuned to find out how Michigan compares to the national survey results!

* 2004 HealthStyles Survey. Results reported in MMWR, 53(44);1044-1047/ November 12, 2004. Awareness of Family Health History as a Risk Factor for Disease — United States, 2004. www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5344a5.htm

Why is knowledge of your family health history important?

Family members share common habits, lifestyles, and environments. They also share traits that are passed through the generations, which is why family members often resemble one another. The family tree, and health history, reflect all of these shared influences. Lifestyle changes may be especially important to you if your family health history shows a higher risk for certain chronic diseases.



Let's go surfing!

www.hhs.gov/familyhistory

www.cdc.gov/genomics/public/famhist.htm

www.MIGeneticsConnection.org

www.nsgc.org/consumer

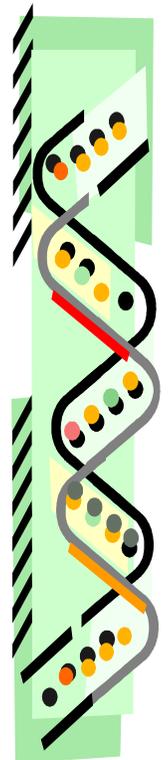
www.geneticalliance.org, click genetic resources, then family history tools

www.generationalhealth.com

"Genes draw your road map, but you still chart your course"

—Jane E. Brody, New York Times,

Feb. 25, 2002



Michigan Department of Community Health



Jennifer M. Granholm, Governor
Janet Olszewski, Director

Family History and Your Health

Spring is here! And along with it allergy season.....



May is Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month



Asthma is a lifelong (chronic) breathing problem. It is caused by swelling of the airways in reaction to various substances in the environment called stimuli or triggers. The symptoms can vary from coughing to wheezing and having difficulty breathing. Asthma, left untreated or not treated properly, may even cause death.

One in every 15 Michigan children attending school is affected with asthma, and it is the leading cause of missed school days. Asthma rates in Michigan adults are slightly higher than in the U.S. By identifying children at risk for developing asthma and educating both adults and children about prevention and warning signs, complications related to asthma can be reduced.

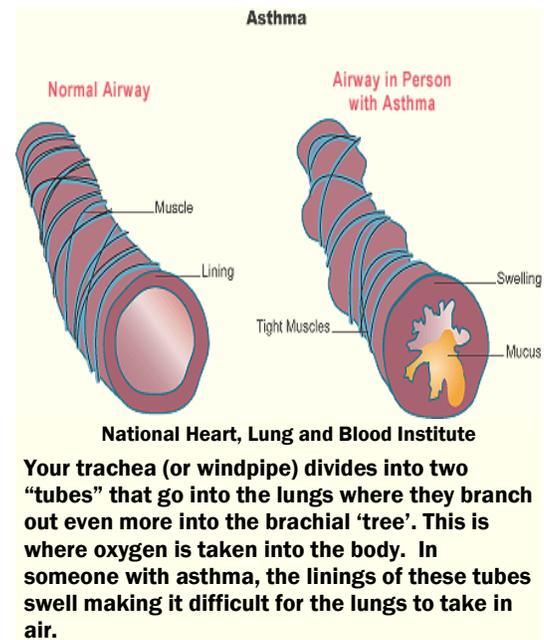
Family History and Asthma

There are many risk factors to consider when determining someone's risk for asthma. However, one risk factor is often overlooked—the family health history. Although no single “asthma gene” has yet been identified, family history is still an important tool. It is thought that a person's susceptibility to asthma may be due to many genes interacting together as well as with the environment. Studies have shown:

- ◆ Over half of children who are diagnosed with asthma have a family history of asthma
- ◆ A person's risk of developing asthma is higher if he/she has a parent and sibling with asthma

Triggers or stimuli in our environment that can cause symptoms of asthma include:

- ◆ Tobacco Smoke
- ◆ Dust and dust mites
- ◆ Chemical odors
- ◆ Pet dander
- ◆ Cold air
- ◆ Other particles found outside
- ◆ Termites



Family Health History

1. Talk about it
2. Write it down
3. Pass it on!

For more information, please contact the Public Health Genomics Program by e-mail: genetics@michigan.gov or call toll-free: 1-866-852-1247

Healthy Homes are a Family Affair!

Healthy Homes University is a federally funded Michigan program working to provide help for families and children with asthma or allergies. The program is for low to moderate income families living in Ingham County who have children less than 18 years old with asthma or allergy symptoms. Eligible families will receive free intervention products to reduce asthma triggers and prevent injuries. The goal of Healthy Homes is to identify 300 families to receive a wide variety of services.

If you would like to receive information or fill out an application please visit the Healthy Homes website at www.michigan.gov/leadsafe or call Linda Stewart at (517)335-8867.



Asthma and Schools

For those who have a child with asthma, please note that in March 2000, Michigan passed a law allowing children with asthma to carry an inhaler with them in school. This makes access to their inhaler easier during emergency situations and prior to physical activities. In order to carry an inhaler, three conditions must be met:

- ◆ The student must have written permission to use the inhaler from a physician or health care provider
- ◆ If the student is under the age of 18, he/she must also have permission from a parent or legal guardian to carry his/her inhaler
- ◆ The principal or chief administrator must receive a copy of each written approval for the student.

This law only applies if the school or district does not have any policy to the contrary, so check with your child's school. Be your child's advocate to make school safe and fun for all!

On the Web...

Michigan Department of Community Health-
Lead Program and Healthy Homes University
www.michigan.gov/leadsafe

Asthma Initiative of Michigan (AIM)
www.getastmahelp.org

Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America-
Michigan Chapter
www.aafamich.org

Asthma and Schools
www.asthmaandschools.org

National Heart Lung and Blood Institute- Asthma page
www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/lung/index.htm

Asthma Genomics: A Public Health Perspective
www.cdc.gov/genomics/training/perspectives/asthma.htm

May 31
World No Tobacco Day

"World No Tobacco Day" is the only global event established to call attention to the impact of tobacco on health and reduce the use of tobacco. The American Cancer Society estimates that approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ of cancer related deaths in 2005 were caused by tobacco use alone. Secondhand smoke (or Environmental Tobacco Smoke -ETS) also poses health risks, especially to children. Studies have shown an increase in cases of asthma and ear infections due to ETS. For information on quit kits go to www.michigan.gov/mdch and click on prevention, or call 1-800-480-7848.

