



# 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](http://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/](http://www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines/) to view

### Web Resources

[www.medped.org](http://www.medped.org)  
(information on inherited cholesterol disorders)

[www.MIGeneticsConnection.org](http://www.MIGeneticsConnection.org)

[www.nhlbi.nih.gov/chd/](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/chd/)  
(National Cholesterol Education Program)

[www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov)  
(new food pyramid web site)

[www.michiganstepsup.org](http://www.michiganstepsup.org)  
(Michigan Steps Up official web site)

[www.michigan.gov/mdch/](http://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

## 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.

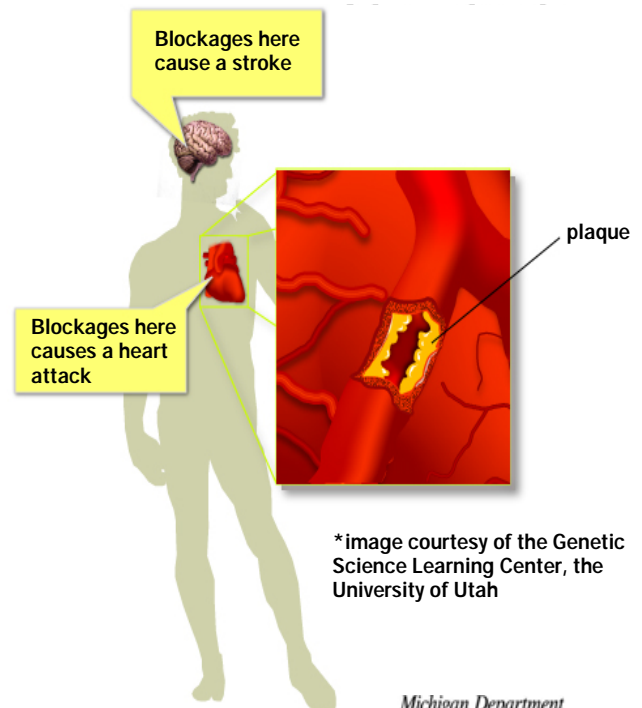
#### Total cholesterol:

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

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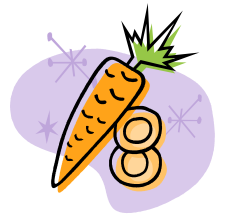
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# Family History and Your Health

## 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.

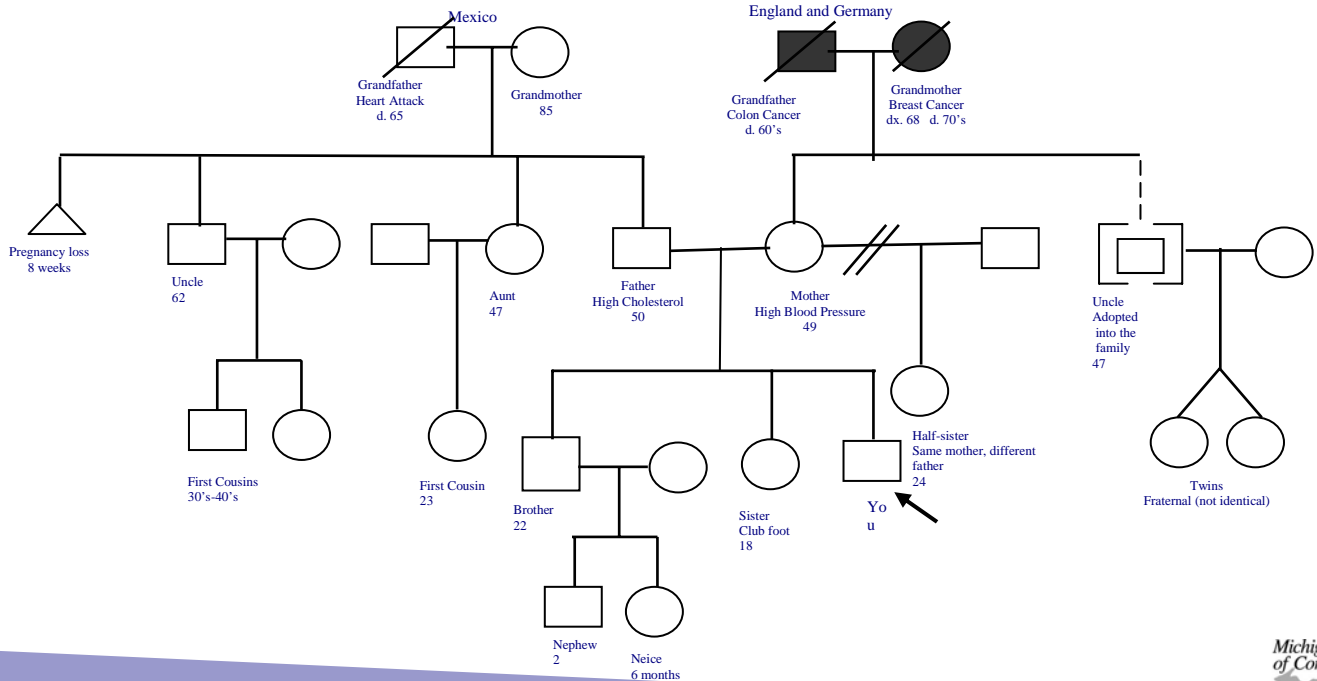
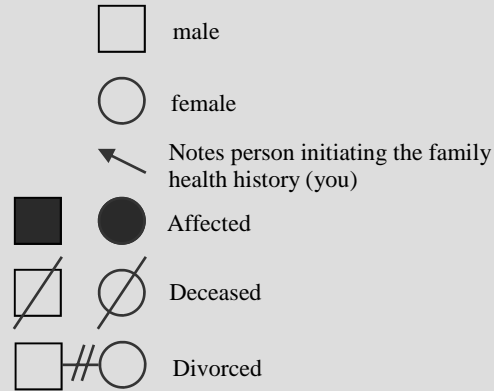
**Second degree relatives** — are two steps away from you. They include half-siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles and grandchildren.

**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](http://www.MIGeneticsConnection.org)

[www.lungusa.org](http://www.lungusa.org) (American Lung Association)

[www.wntd.org](http://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 2003<sup>1</sup>. 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 smoke<sup>2</sup>. Passive smoke also leads to an increase in acute and chronic middle ear infections and asthma in children.

**Protect yourself and your family!**

References:

<sup>1</sup> 1985-2003 Michigan Resident Death Files, Vital Records, Michigan Department of Community Health

<sup>2</sup> Action on Smoking and Health, [www.ash.org.uk](http://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](http://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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Janet Olszewski, Director



## 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 Cancer .....before 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 Death .....before 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](http://www.MIGeneticsConnection.org)

[www.hhs.gov/familyhistory](http://www.hhs.gov/familyhistory)

[www.nci.nih.gov/cancertopics/prevention-genetics-causes/colon-and-rectal](http://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](http://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](mailto:genetics@michigan.gov) or call  
toll-free: 1-866-852-1247

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### 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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.hhs.gov/familyhistory)

[www.cdc.gov/genomics/public/famhist.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/genomics/public/famhist.htm)

[www.MIGeneticsConnection.org](http://www.MIGeneticsConnection.org)

[www.nsgc.org/consumer](http://www.nsgc.org/consumer)

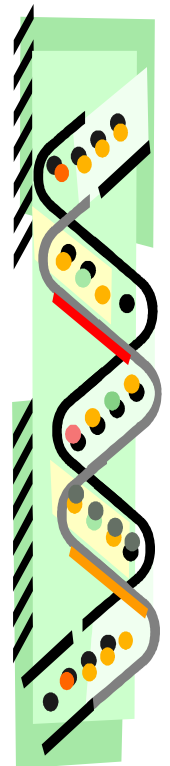
[www.geneticalliance.org](http://www.geneticalliance.org), click genetic resources, then family history tools

[www.generationalhealth.com](http://www.generationalhealth.com)

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