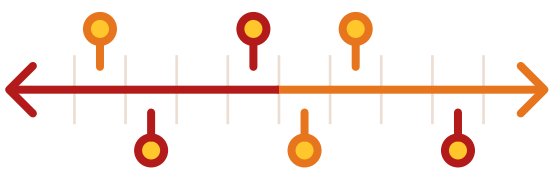
Weill Cornell Medicine

Finding Health Clues **in Your Family Tree**

Knowing your family health history can empower you in your own wellness journey.

Why It Matters

Learning what health conditions your family members have faced can help you:



- Understand your risk for certain serious diseases that often run in families, **such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure and mental health disorders**
- Plan a screening schedule and, if necessary, **genetic testing, with your doctor that fits your risk profile**
- Identify the most effective lifestyle changes for reducing your disease risk, **while acknowledging some factors you can't control**

Who To Talk To (or Learn About)

Gather health information about your:

- Parents
- Siblings
- Children
- Grandparents
- Aunts and uncles
- Nieces and nephews
- First cousins

Information to Collect

When putting together your family health history, be sure to include the following important details about your relatives:

- Ancestry and ethnicity information
- Causes of death and ages at which they died
- Medical conditions and the ages at which these were diagnosed
- Family history of smoking, vaping, alcohol use or drug use
- Exposure to harmful chemicals or environmental factors

Start the Conversation

You can collect information on your family's health history by:

Finding the family historian

Talk to the person in your family known for compiling group history, whether it's your mom, grandfather, sister or someone else.

Scheduling one-on-one chats

Arrange a lunch date or an evening video call with a family member to catch up and talk about health history.

Taking advantage of large gatherings

Ask about family health history when many relatives are together for holiday parties or birthday celebrations.

Concerned about a health condition that runs in your family? Find a doctor today: weillcornell.org/doctors

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