

# Family Health History Checklist: Adults

- ❑ **Talk to your family.** Write down the names of blood relatives you need to include in your history. The most important relatives to include in your family health history are your parents, brothers, sisters, and children. Next, you may want to talk to grandparents, uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews, half-brothers, and half-sisters.
- ❑ **Ask questions.** To find out about your risk for [chronic diseases](#), ask your relatives about which of these diseases they have had and when they were diagnosed. Questions can include
  - Do you have any chronic diseases, such as heart disease or diabetes, or health conditions such as high blood pressure or high cholesterol?
  - Have you had any other serious diseases, such as cancer or stroke?
  - How old were you when each of these diseases and health conditions was diagnosed?
  - What is our family's ancestry – from what countries did our ancestors come to the United States?
  - For relatives who have died, be sure to ask about cause and age of death.
- ❑ **Record the information.** Write this information down, and be sure to update it from time to time. To organize the information in your family health history you could use a free web-based tool such as the Surgeon General's [My Family Health Portrait](#). My Family Health Portrait allows you to share this information easily with your doctor.
- ❑ **Share family health history information with your doctor and other family members.** Your family health history can give you an idea of your risk for chronic diseases like cancer, heart disease and diabetes, but it is not the only factor to consider. If you are concerned about diseases that are common in your family, talk with your doctor at your next visit. A doctor can evaluate all of the factors that may affect your risk of some diseases, including family health history, and can recommend ways to reduce that risk.
- ❑ **Act on your family health history.** Having a family health history of a disease does not mean that you or your family members will definitely get that disease. It is important that you talk with your doctor about steps that you can take to lower your chances of getting the disease. You have already taken the first step by learning about your family health history!

For more information, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/genomics/famhistory/index.htm>