Know Your Medical History

CHALLENGE
Get info to manage your health

Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read "Know Your Medical History."
2. Create a plan to get to know your medical history.
3. Keep a record of your completed health challenge in case your organization requires documentation.

The young John Bellairs from Marshall, Michigan, wasn't the athletic type. He got sick more often than some kids. He was shy. He preferred books and ice cream to baseball and football. He spent a lot of time at home thinking and reading. And he often worried about money and mysterious things.

For Bellairs, it was just the kind of childhood that inspired him to become a writer. He published his first novel by the time he was 28 years old. He wrote stories about spooky houses, wizards, magic, ghosts, and fictional teens a little braver and stronger than he was as a kid.

He won a long list of literary awards for novels like The Mummy, the Will, and the Crypt and The House with a Clock In Its Walls. He published 31 books during his career and gained a massive following of fans.

And then at age 53, it was over. Bellairs died of heart disease. Diet, exercise and lifestyle habits played a part. But he also had a long family history of heart disease.

What's your story? Do you know your medical history? What about your biological parents, siblings and other relatives? Their medical history matters, too. If you want to prevent disease, be healthier and live longer, take the month long health challenge to Know Your Medical History.

Anatomy of an electronic health record https://tinyurl.com/y2v39g6e

Quiz: Medical History Matters

How much do you know about medical history data? Take the quiz to find out.

T F
1. ☐ ☐ A healthcare provider must grant you access to your personal medical records.
2. ☐ ☐ Not all personal health data stored in digital devices (phones, watches, tablets, etc.) is protected.
3. ☐ ☐ Health officials recommend collecting two generations of medical history for blood relatives.
4. ☐ ☐ Your relatives' health history can help your doctor determine your risk for certain diseases or health conditions.
5. ☐ ☐ Your personal medical history can help your healthcare team recommend diet, exercise, lifestyle choices, and medications to prevent or manage disease.

How did you do? The National Institutes of Health recommends collecting three generations of medical records for blood relatives.[1] Why? If you have a family history of a chronic disease, your risk is often greater. Your personal and family medical history can help you make choices to prevent disease, be healthier, and live longer.

Answers: 1.True. 2.True. 3.False. 4.True. 5.True.

Health History: Can You Answer THESE 6 Questions?

Every time you visit a new doctor, it might feel like you have to tell your life history in medical moments. For example:

1. Have you had any surgeries? When?
2. Are you taking any medications? List all that apply.
3. What are you allergic to? List all known allergies.
4. Have you been vaccinated for measles, shingles, lockjaw (tetanus), or other diseases? When?
5. Have you experienced recent weight loss or weight gain? When?
6. Do you have a family medical history of (fill in the blank)? Please describe.

It's not uncommon for this to be a big list of questions. And if you're like most people, you may not have all the answers. Or maybe you know where to find the medical info you need, but it's scattered in a variety of locations in digital and print form.

Sound familiar? Now is always a good time to begin organizing your medical history.

5 Ways to Know Your Medical History

Wondering where to start? Here are some easy ways to get to know your medical history, get organized, prevent disease, and stay healthy.

1. Keep your medical records in one place

Prefer old-school paper format? Get a notebook or binder to create a paper trail of your medical history. Whenever you get a bill, diagnosis, test results, or explanation of benefits, add it to your binder. It's a good place to keep a copy of your health insurance card, too.

If you prefer digital, scan or take a picture of these documents and save them on your computer. Bring this with you when you go to a doctor's appointment.

2. Compile healthcare contact info

Do you know how to contact your doctor, dentist, chiropractor, or other healthcare professional?

- Compile all the contact information for your healthcare providers in one place.
- Name, address, phone number, email address.
- You may even include a note
- for each record about your last visit.
- Keep it in your notebook or digital file.

Digital tools to manage your health history
https://tinyurl.com/y2pnpw33

3. Request your records

Maybe you moved away, changed doctors, or haven't been to see a doctor in a long time. You can still get your records.

- Federal law gives you the right to obtain your medical records from virtually any organization or business that provides healthcare services.[2] Just ask.

4. Use digital tools

- **Most healthcare organizations** use online patient portals that allow you to access your medical records.
- **Your employer** may also provide a wellness portal or platform that contains your health information.
- **And there's a growing number of mobile apps** that allow you to store and organize your medical history.

Use these digital tools to manage your health, share information with your doctor, and track your medical history.[3]

5. Talk to your family members

Your personal health history provides useful information to monitor your health. But it's not the whole story.[4] If you have a family history of certain health conditions, your risk rises.

Video: How to access your medical records
http://tinyurl.com/mr37df29

Common diseases that run in families include:

- Heart disease
- High blood pressure
- Asthma
- Diabetes
- Breast cancer
- Lung cancer
- Prostate cancer

How do you learn the health history of your family members?

The easiest way: just ask.

- **Talk about it.** Set aside some time to talk about it. Keep notes, and add the information to your binder or digital file.
- **If you're adopted,** you may be able to access medical records about your biological parents.
- **If you don't have medical information** from an adoption or don't know your biological parents or family members, genetic testing can give you some insight into your health risks.

When you know your medical history, you've got information that can help you prevent disease, manage health conditions, feel better, and live longer.

References

1. Filoche, S., et al. (2021). How is family health history discussed in routine primary healthcare? A qualitative study of archived family doctor consultations. *BMJ Open,* 11(10): e049058. From: http://tinyurl.com/4uzdm6uv

2. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2023). Individuals' Right under HIPAA to access their health information 45 CFR § 164.524. From: http://tinyurl.com/yrz9kpd5

3. Lin, H.L., et al. (2020). Association between electronic medical records and healthcare quality. *Medicine (Baltimore),* 99(31): e21182. From: http://tinyurl.com/4d5cnnr3

4. National Library of Medicine. (2021). Why is it important to know my family health history? From: http://tinyurl.com/59rkvrad

Know Your Medical History

CHALLENGE
Get info to manage your health

Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, or add to your digital calendar.
2. Create a plan to get to know your medical history and organize it.
3. Use the calendar to record your actions and choices to get to know your medical history.
4. Review your progress at the end of each day, week, and at the end of the month. Then keep up the practice for a lifetime of best health.

MONTH:

HC = Health Challenge™   ex. min. = exercise minutes

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	Weight & weekly summary
HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	
HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	
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HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	

_____ Number of days this month I took action to learn about my medical history

_____ Number of days this month I exercised at least 30 minutes

Other wellness projects completed this month:

_____

_____

Name _____ Date _____