

Family Health History: Know Your Risk

A family health history is a record of your family's health. Certain health conditions are passed from generation to generation, and knowing which health conditions are common in your family is important for your healthcare provider. This information can help your provider understand and manage your health risks.

Things to include in your Family Health History

Remember to:

- Collect information from 3 generations on both sides of your family.
- Share this information with your healthcare provider and update it every year.

Collect information from 3 generations on both sides of your family, including:

- ✓ Age or age at death
- ✓ Medical conditions and diseases
- ✓ Age of disease diagnosis
- ✓ Cause of death

Based on your family health history, your healthcare provider may recommend genetic services, where you meet with a genetic counselor or medical geneticist to learn about your risk.

People who have the following health issues in their family may benefit from genetic services:

✓ Early health issues, such as:

- A diagnosis before age 50 or younger for diseases like cancer, diabetes, or heart problems.
- Sudden death for unknown reasons.

✓ Growth and development concerns, including:

- Developmental delays
- Intellectual disability
- Short stature
- Uneven growth

✓ Pregnancy and childbirth complications, like:

- History of congenital disabilities or differences,
- Stillbirth or childhood death
- Infertility, or more than 3 unexplained miscarriages

✓ Known genetic conditions or diseases that appear in multiple family members.

Ready to get started? Try the CDC's free online family health history tool: [My Family Health Portrait](#)



How much do genetic services cost?

Costs vary based on the type of service, clinic fees, and whether insurance will cover part or all the services.

If you're interested in genetic services, it's best to talk to your doctor and insurance provider. This will help understand which services are covered and any costs you may have.

If you have questions about insurance, please contact your primary care provider or your local genetics clinic for assistance.

Find the nearest genetics clinic:

www.doh.wa.gov/geneticclinics

Need More Help?

Whether you need genetic testing, counseling, or services, the WA DOH Genetics Program is here to support you. If you have questions that are not answered here or need personalized assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out. Please use the QR code below to provide us feedback.

Sincerely,

WA State Genetics Program

genetics@doh.wa.gov



Frequently Asked Questions

What are genetic services?

Genetic services include working with experts like genetic counselors or geneticists. These services may or may not include genetic testing, which checks your DNA to assess health risks or inherited conditions.

Genetic services may help answer questions like:

- ✓ How did this happen?
- ✓ Could this happen again?
- ✓ What are the chances that my children or I could have this?
- ✓ Where can we go for help or support?
- ✓ Is there a test to detect this early?
- ✓ How can I stay healthy?

What happens to my genetic information?

There are laws that protect your privacy. Health insurance companies and employers cannot treat you differently based on your genetic information.

Your information stays between you, your health care provider, and the genetic specialists you consult with.