

# JANUARY 2021

# Parents Page

Anyone who has been by Len's Pharmacy in the last few months, knows that big changes are coming. History is important to us here at Len's Pharmacy and that is why we pay homage to those that came before, allowing us to be who we are today, and paving the way for us to be who we will be in the future. Your history is also important to us. We are coming up to the time of year we begin to ask you to ensure your information is up to date. Your address, medication allergies, insurance, and now getting text messages when your prescription is ready for pickup.

But did you know that your history is important even back a few generations?

Building a family tree has become more and more popular. With at home DNA testing, the process is becoming easier and easier. But what, if any, benefits are there to building a Medical Family Tree, or Family Health History? The Mayo Clinic says that the Medical Family Tree helps a person understand their risks for disease that may be common in their family. We inherit our genetic material from our parents and it helps to determine not only our appearance, but also risk factors that may lead to certain disease states.

Pharmacy Today reports that a recent survey shows that 96% of Americans believe that knowing their family history is important, but only one-third of Americans have actually tried to collect and record their family's health history.

Why is family health history important for my family's health? Many health conditions tend to run in families and are passed down through generations. These include cancers, diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease as well as lesser known diseases such as sickle cell disease or hemophilia. The family health history can also point out decreased risk for the above diseases. My Family Health Portrait is an online tool provided by the Surgeon General and housed on the CDC website. Using My Family Health Portrait you can:

- Enter your family health history.
- Learn about your risk for conditions that can run in families.
- Print your family health history to share with family or your health care provider
- Save your family health history so you can update it over time.

The following is the type of information that the My Family Health Portrait collects: sex, date of birth, ethnicity, medical conditions, mental health or substance abuse, pregnancy history, lifestyle habits, age and cause of death of relatives, and other pertinent information.

The information collected will be helpful for yourself and other family members. The information should be shared with family members as well as healthcare providers. It will help with discussions concerning diagnostic or screening tests, planning for the future and change in lifestyle.

The CDC recommends including three generations of your family. This includes yourself, your parents and grandparents. Also included would be your siblings, including any half-siblings. With so much information collected on your family, it will be important to update when a new diagnosis is made on yourself or a family member. The Mayo Clinic even recommends recording new births in My Family Health Portrait.

Sharing this newly collected information with your Primary Care Provider, your Medical Home, and your Pharmacy, will allow an integrated team approach to your family's healthcare both today and in the future.

In conclusion, Family Trees can be very intriguing and informational, but taking the time to develop a Medical Family Tree or Family Health History, is an important step in your participation in your and your family's healthcare.

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