Lab A1-2 Creating a Family Health Tree

Knowing that a specific disease runs in your family allows you to watch closely for the early warning signs and get appropriate screening tests. It can also help you target important health habits to adopt. You can put together a simple family health tree by compiling key facts on your primary relatives: siblings, parents, aunts and uncles, and grandparents. If possible, have your primary relatives fill out a family health history record like the one below.

Family Health History

Name: ___________________________ Ethnicity: ______________ Date of birth: __________

Blood and Rh type: ___________________________ Occupation: ___________________________

Please note any serious or chronic diseases you have experienced, with special attention to the following:

_____ Alcoholism
_____ Allergies
_____ Arthritis
_____ Asthma
_____ Blood diseases (hemophilia, sickle cell disease, thalassemia, hemochromatosis)
_____ Cancer
_____ Cystic fibrosis
_____ Diabetes
_____ Epilepsy
_____ Familial high blood cholesterol levels
_____ Hearing defects
_____ Heart defects
_____ Huntington's disease
_____ Hypertension (high blood pressure)
_____ Learning disabilities (dyslexia, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, autism)
_____ Liver disease (particularly hepatitis)
_____ Lupus
_____ Mental illness (depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia)

_____ Mental impairment (Down syndrome, fragile X, etc.)
_____ Migraine headaches
_____ Miscarriages or neonatal deaths
_____ Multiple sclerosis
_____ Muscular dystrophy
_____ Myasthenia gravis
_____ Obesity
_____ Phenylketonuria (PKU)
_____ Respiratory disease (emphysema, bacterial pneumonia)
_____ Rh disease
_____ Skin disorders (particularly psoriasis)
_____ Thyroid disorders
_____ Tay-Sachs disease
_____ Tuberculosis
_____ Visual disorders (dyslexia, glaucoma, retinitis pigmentosa)
_____ Other (please list):
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List any other important health-related behaviors (including tobacco use, dietary and exercise habits, and alcohol use):

Please write the names of your relatives below, and note any illnesses, such as those listed on the previous page, that affect them. If they are deceased, list age and cause. Also note lifestyle habits, such as smoking.

Father: ____________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

Mother: __________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

Brothers and sisters: ______________________________________________

________________________________________________________

Children of brothers and sisters: _____________________________________

________________________________________________________

Aunts and uncles: ________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

Grandparents: ____________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

If you don’t have enough information on past generations, you can get clues by requesting death certificates from state health departments or medical records from relatives’ physicians or hospitals where they died. Once you’ve collected the information you want, plug it into a tree format. An online version of a family health tree is available at http://www.generationalhealth.com.