

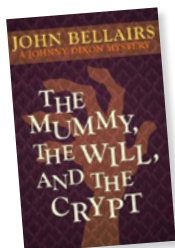
# Know Your Medical History

## 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 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: *Know Your Medical History: Get info to manage your health.*<sup>1</sup>

## Medical history matters: How much do you know?

Take the quiz to find out.

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.

Check your answers. How did you do? If you answered any of these statements incorrectly, take a minute to learn more about your medical history. The National Institutes of Health recommends collecting three generations of medical records for blood relatives.<sup>4</sup> 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. True. 4. False. 5. True.

## Do you know your medical history?

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

- Have you had any surgeries? When?
- Are you taking any medications? List all that apply.
- What are you allergic to? List all known allergies.
- Have you been vaccinated for measles, shingles, lockjaw (tetanus), or other diseases? When?
- Have you experienced recent weight loss or weight gain? When?
- 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 to begin organizing your medical history.