

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

Anatomy of an electronic health record tinyurl.com/y2v39g6e

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

Digital tools to help you manage health information tinyurl.com/y2pnpw33

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.

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. Just ask.

4. Use digital tools

Some 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.²



5. Talk to your family members

Your personal health history provides useful information to monitor your health. But it's not the whole story. If you have a family history of certain health conditions, your risk rises. Common diseases that run in families include:³

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

Video: Take charge of your medical data tinyurl.com/yxr3zqmh

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

The easiest way: just ask. Set aside some time to talk about it. Keep notes, and add the information to your binder or digital file. 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

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