

Family History and Your Health

To What Degree?

People find it difficult when they start talking about their relationships to family members. What degree the relative is in relationship to you is important because the closer the relative is, the greater is your risk. The following information will help clear up some of these terms. It helps to think of relatives in steps:

First degree relatives — are one step away from you. They include parents, children or siblings.

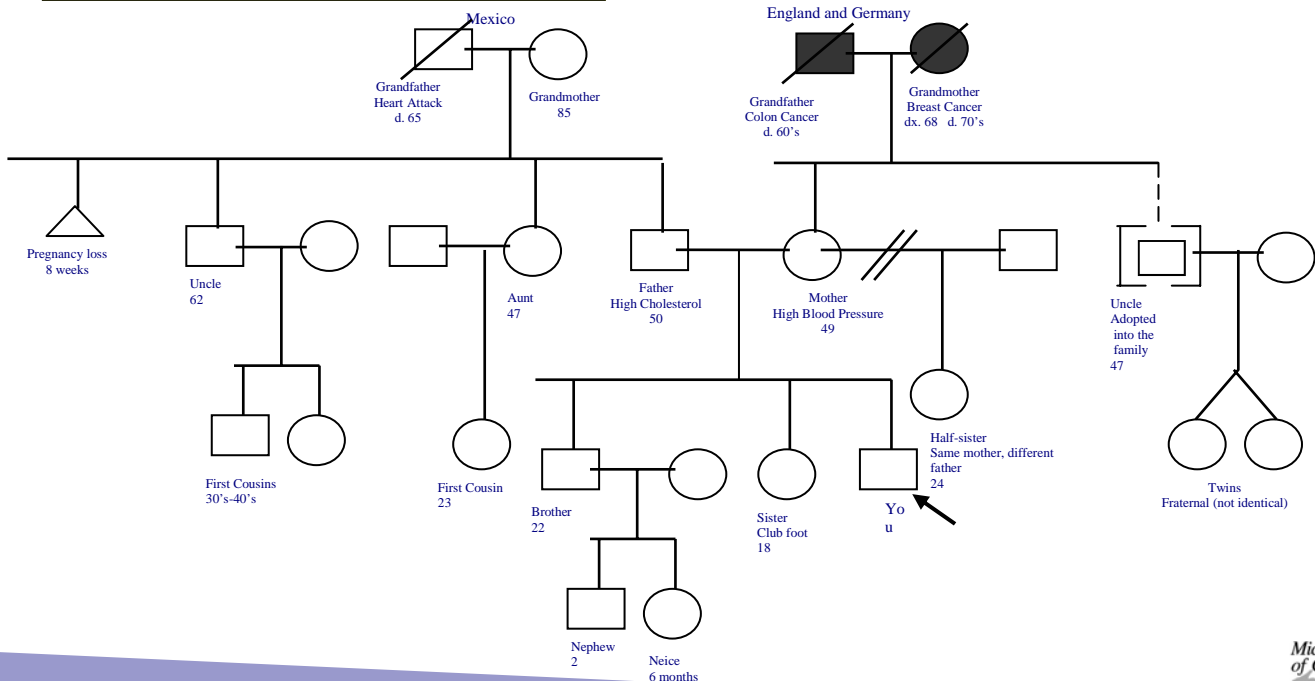
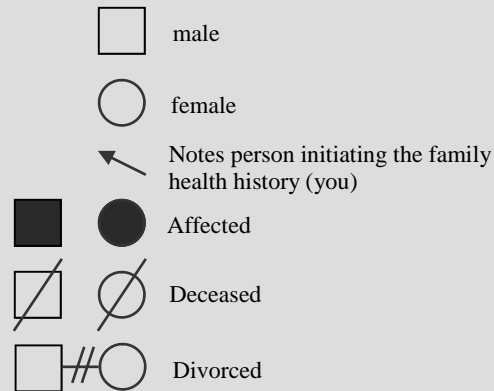
Second degree relatives — are two steps away from you. They include half-siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles and grandchildren.

Third degree relatives — are three steps away from you and include first cousins.

A Picture is Worth..... YOUR HEALTH!

Family health histories are often better understood when they are drawn out as a pedigree (or family tree). Diagrams are more easily referenced and relationships are much clearer in a “picture”. Below are the standard symbols used in a pedigree along with a sample family health history to help you get started.

Standardized Pedigree Symbols and Relationships



Words to Know

Passive Smoke - Also called secondhand smoke, is smoke in the environment someone is exposed to involuntarily. There are two kinds:

- 1) **Side stream** - smoke released from burning tobacco, such as the end of a cigarette,
- 2) **Main stream** - smoke exhaled by a person who smokes.

Affected - The individual diagnosed with a condition.

Questions to ask

1. Has anyone in your family been diagnosed with lung cancer?
2. What is their relationship to you?
3. At what age were they diagnosed?
4. Did they smoke? How much/how long?

World No Tobacco Day

May 31



For more information visit the World No Tobacco Day web site listed below.

Resources

www.MIGeneticsConnection.org

www.lungusa.org (American Lung Association)

www.wntd.org (World No Tobacco Day)

Quitting isn't easy. For help in quitting smoking contact the numbers below and keep trying!

1-800-480-7848 - Michigan Tobacco Quit Line

1-800-557-5666—For a FREE Smoker's Quit Kit, Expectant Mother's Quit Kit, and Smoking Around Children brochure



Spotlight on: Lung Cancer

5,680 Michigan residents died from lung cancer in 2003¹. Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths in both men and women across the United States with 172,570 new cases and 163,510 deaths estimated in 2005 (American Cancer Society). Lung cancer is very difficult to diagnose early as there are no symptoms initially in the disease. If it is found early on, it is usually because the individual went to their health care provider for other concerns. There are several factors that increase your risk for getting lung cancer.

- ⇒ **SMOKING (stopping smoking can reduce your risk of lung cancer by as much as 50%)**
- ⇒ **A family history of lung cancer**
- ⇒ **A diet low in fruits and vegetables**
- ⇒ **Certain environmental hazards such as asbestos and radon**
- ⇒ **Air pollution**

About 80-90% of all lung cancers are due to smoking. Stopping smoking is the best thing you can do to lower your risk. But, recent research has shown that 10% of lung cancers are in non-smokers, indicating there are other factors, including genetics, that are involved. Research also shows lung cancer can run in families.

A First Hand Look at Secondhand Smoke

Children with one or two parents who smoke are more likely to become smokers themselves. And even if they don't become smokers, a child or non-smoking spouse's risk of getting lung cancer increases by 24% due to exposure to passive smoke². Passive smoke also leads to an increase in acute and chronic middle ear infections and asthma in children.

Protect yourself and your family!

References:

¹ 1985-2003 Michigan Resident Death Files, Vital Records, Michigan Department of Community Health

² Action on Smoking and Health, www.ash.org.uk

“Genes draw your roadmap, but you still chart your course.....”

**-Jane E. Brody, New York Times,
Feb. 25, 2002**

