

PLAN FOR HEALTH

Family Health

AUGUST 2023



Families provide their individual members with key resources for healthful living, including food, shelter, a sense of self-worth, and access to medical care. Raising a healthy family can be easier with an understanding of family health history, access to health services in your community, and by creating home habits that promote family wellness.

UNDERSTANDING FAMILY HEALTH HISTORY

Family health history is a record of the diseases and health conditions in your family. Family members share genetics, and can also share behaviors like eating habits, smoking, or activity level. It is important to know your family health history and share it with your doctor so they can help decide which screening tests you need and when those tests should start.

Preventive care involves knowing if you are at risk for developing a certain disease or chronic conditions (i.e., heart disease, cancer, diabetes, etc.) that may be based on your family history. Gather information regarding your relatives' major medical conditions, causes of death and health background. Be sure to update the information regularly and share what you've learned with your family and with your doctor.

While you can't change your genes, you can change unhealthy behaviors, such as smoking, not exercising or being active, and poor eating habits. In many cases, healthy habits can reduce your risk for diseases that run in your family. Screening tests, such as annual bloodwork, mammograms, and colorectal cancer screenings help find early signs of disease. Finding disease early can often mean better health in the long run.

ACCESS TO HEALTHY LIVING

It is important that everyone has a fair opportunity to achieve good health and wellbeing. There are many community resources available to help families access healthy foods, safe transportation, quality medical care, and more. If you or your family need assistance, try:

- Reaching out to your employer's EAP (employee assistance program).
- Contacting your health plan provider about where to find care or how to access your benefits.
- Calling 211 for more information on essential services in your community.

WELLNESS TOGETHER

Making sure all the members in your household are healthy can seem overwhelming. Here are some small changes you and your family can make together to start focusing on health and wellness daily.

- **Create a calendar to block out free time for activities together** - Find common free time between your family members' busy schedules by planning it out on a shared calendar. You and your family are more apt to stick to scheduled time together versus doing it on the fly.
- **Plan a weekly menu together** - Children tend to be less picky and eat more balanced meals if they are involved in the planning and making of meals and snacks. Get your kids input and include them in helping to create 1-2 healthy meals per week to start.
- **Get moving together** - From toddlers to grandparents, everyone can benefit from more physical activity. Finding ways to be active as a family can be easy and fun.

- Join in with your kids while they play, hop on your bike, or jump rope.
- Have a dance party or take a walk together.
- Pause the screens. No more than 1-2 hours per day.
- Create a family chore chart.
- Learn a new skill or sport together.
- Volunteer together.

- **Spend time together** - Life can be hectic. Focus on quality time by creating family traditions and routines so this time doesn't fall off the radar. Learning how to resolve conflict and manage stress inside the home will translate to healthy practices in the outside world.
- **Sleep well** - Regular sleep schedules for adults and kids are important. Avoid screen time 1 hour before bed by picking an activity to do together like reading a book, listening to calm music, or try a guided meditation.
- **Take baby steps** - Pick 1-2 of these tips to implement in your family's routine to start. You do not have to do everything at once. Small steps lead to big changes.

A healthy routine can help kids and adults feel better, improve mental health, and decrease and prevent conditions such as anxiety and depression.

Sharecare Featured Challenge:

Join the Beat the Heat challenge and work on staying hydrated in the summer heat during the month of August. Complete the challenge by tracking your hydration for 21 days this month! Join this challenge starting on July 25th by going to mycare.sharecare.com, clicking **Achieve** → **Challenges** → **Upcoming and join the challenge**.



Plan ahead...Join us next month for September's health topic: Immunization and Medication Management