



## Family Medical Histories

I got a rude awakening from my grown son this fall – he didn't know our family medical history! As unimportant as that sounds, familial diseases such as diabetes and heart disease all bear watching by doctors, even in younger people. I had kept all the family history but it never occurred to me that I hadn't completely communicated this to my children.

The Surgeon General has implemented a new free website that helps alleviate this problem. At <http://www.hhs.gov/familyhistory> you can enter your history from grandparents down to children for the major threats of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, colon cancer, breast cancer and ovarian cancer. You are also able to enter other diseases that affect your particular family. The program is private; not saved on the website; and very user friendly. The results can be printed in a family tree format or a chart format for easy reference by you, your doctor or by children. This is well worth the short amount of time it takes to do this, in order to help your whole family be better medical advocates for themselves.

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