

Family Health History Tool

How to Create a Health Portrait of My Family

Knowing the Medical History of your Family can Save your Life

WHAT INFORMATION DO I NEED?

- **Speak directly with your relatives.**

Explain that knowing their health information can improve the prevention and control of diseases for ALL members of the family.

- **Ask them to share information about any disease they had.**

If you can, get all specific information about chronic diseases like heart disease and diabetes; complications in pregnancy like miscarriages and any developmental disorder.

- **If possible, make a list of the formal names of the diseases.**

It may be useful to create a separate page with the detailed information regarding all diseases that your relatives have had. Also, make a list of medicines they took whenever possible.

- **Get help finding the information.**

Ask your relatives or medical professionals for information about the diseases that have affected you or your family members (living or deceased). Yes, it is possible to get copies of deceased relatives' medical files from their care providers.

- **Is there a cancer or a rare disease in the family?**

If yes, it is important to collect information from every member of the family that is possible. If someone has died, ask other relatives or check if the Doctors kept those medical records.

- **Are you planning to have children?**

You and your partner should create EVERYONE a portrait of health of each family and show it to your doctor.



TALK TO YOUR FAMILY!

If there are health issues that run in your family, your risk of developing those issues may be increased. Similarly, if you have or are planning on having children, you can pass down those risks to them, increasing their risk for developing the conditions as well.

It's important to learn about the history of your family members' health, and to share that history with your physician. Having knowledge of the health history of your family members will help your physician provide personalized care.

Whether you or any family member has been adopted, or identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, documenting their health information and relation to you can be helpful in future healthcare-related decisions. However, risk can only be passed down to children from their biological parents, so prioritize the documentation of health information about your biological family of origin to the extent you can.

HOW DO I FILL OUT THE FORM?

"The Portrait of My Family's Health" will help you collect and organize your family's health information. No form can reflect all versions of American families. Therefore, you should use this table as a starting point and adapt it to your needs.

- 1. Write the names of your relatives in the boxes designated.**

Some diseases are more common in people with a shared origin or ancestry. Therefore, if you know the ancestry of your relatives and / or the country they're from, write it down on the form.

For twins, write "twin" on the first line. If the twins are identical, write "identical twin" for both on the first line. If your family includes half brothers or half sisters, write "half brother" or "half sister" on the first line, and write down "same father" or "same mother" on the next line.

- 2. On the lines under the boxes, write the names of any disease your relatives have had.**

If you know the age at which the disease was diagnosed, write it down on the same line as the disease name. For example: diabetes (diagnosed at 37). If the family member has died, write "deceased" and the age at which they died and include the cause of death. For example: Died at 63 (heart infarction).

- 3. Once you have completed this form, take it to your doctor.**

Your doctor can use the information on this form to provide more personalized health care.

- 4. Make a copy of your files.**

Be sure to update the form when circumstances change or when you learn more about the health of your family.

EXAMPLE

Jane Smith (F)

Grandmother

CAN, Breast, Dx at 56

HBP, Dx at 42

Died at 73 (heart infarction)

Ashkenazi Jewish Heritage

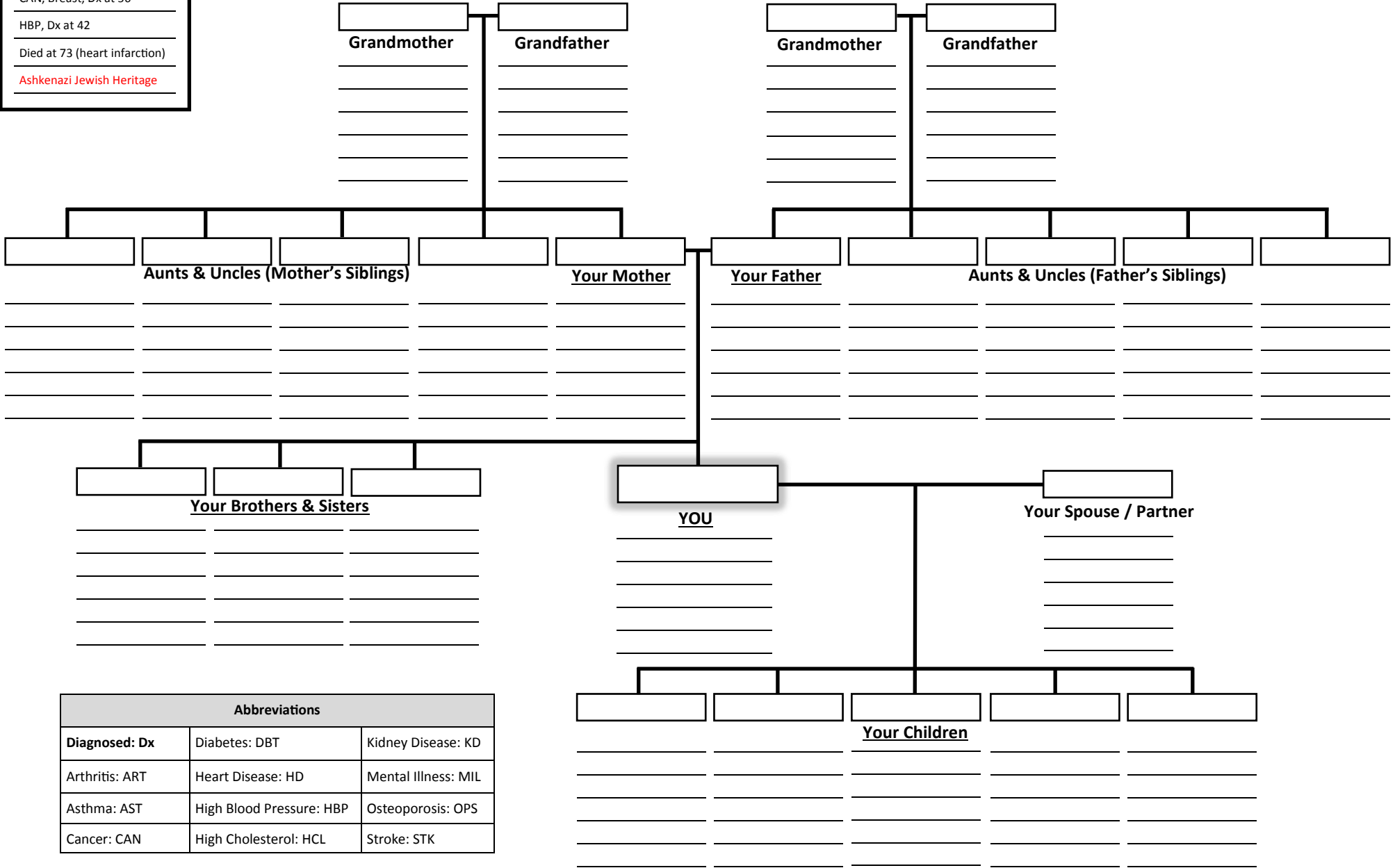
My Family's Health Portrait

Name: _____

Date Completed: ___/___/___

Your Biological Mother's Family

Your Biological Father's Family



Abbreviations		
Diagnosed: Dx	Diabetes: DBT	Kidney Disease: KD
Arthritis: ART	Heart Disease: HD	Mental Illness: MIL
Asthma: AST	High Blood Pressure: HBP	Osteoporosis: OPS
Cancer: CAN	High Cholesterol: HCL	Stroke: STK