

Many health conditions have some genetic component.

Finding out your family health history and sharing the information with your doctor can help you understand some health issues in your family. The information will help your doctor to identify patterns which may exist in your family.

In summary

1. Your family health history can help your doctor identify;
 - ◇ if there is a genetic condition in your family
 - ◇ whether there is an increased risk of developing certain disorders
2. Include all the information recommended on Table 1
3. Share the information you've gathered with your doctor.
Your doctor can help you draw a family tree

Drawing your family tree (pedigree)

The information you collect will be useful in drawing a family tree, or pedigree. See below for an example of what a pedigree looks like.

- Males are represented by a square; females by a circle. Anyone who has a condition will have a coloured-in shape. When the gender is unknown they will be represented by a diamond symbol
- A line *through* a shape means the person is deceased
- How the squares and circles are connected mean different things
 - * A line *between* two shapes means they are in a relationship, like Mary and Jack or Emily and Greg
 - * A line with shapes connected *below* shows that they are the children of the above (Lily and Lachlan are the children of William and Wendy).

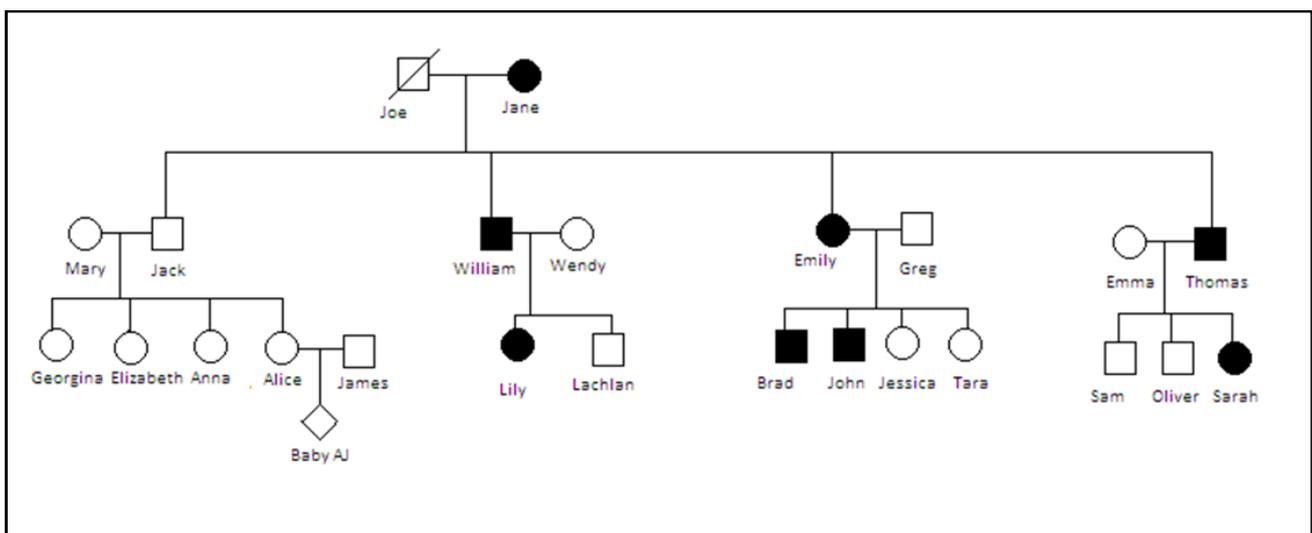


Figure 1. An example of what a family tree/pedigree looks like

Recording your family health history

A table is provided below (Table 1) to help you gather your family health history.

Tips on recording your family health history:

- Start with yourself, then your partner and children
- Add your brother(s)/sister(s) and their children, your parents and grandparents
- Also do this for family on your partner’s side
- Refer to Table 1 to see what information should be included
- Health conditions worth considering are diabetes type 2, high cholesterol and breast, ovarian, bowel or prostate cancer
- If possible, try and get information about aunts, uncles and cousins by talking with someone who you feel comfortable with
- Add any new information when it becomes available

Bring your completed family health record to your doctor. The information can assist your doctor to draw your family tree/pedigree. Keep your doctor up to date with any changes to your family health record.

Table 1. My Family Health record

My Name: _____

Relationship to me	Name, male (m) or female (f)	Date or Year of birth	Health condition, age of diagnosis or age of death
Me			
Date written: _____	Updated on: _____	Updated on: _____	Updated on: _____