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MDHHS  
Encourages

## Family Discussion about Health History this Thanksgiving

(MDHHS, Nov. 23, 2016)

LANSING, MI – In Michigan, approximately one in ten women has a significant family history of breast and/or ovarian cancer. Because of this and other hereditary diseases, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is encouraging potentially lifesaving conversations this Thanksgiving, Nov. 24, as part of National Family History Day.

“Thanksgiving is a traditional time when families gather to share food, conversations, and stories, providing an important opportunity to discuss one’s family health history,” said Dr. Eden Wells, chief medical executive for MDHHS. “Family history changes and



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risks can emerge over time, so talk with your relatives this Thanksgiving to make sure the information you have is up to date.”

Family health history is a medical history about a person’s living and deceased relatives, and should include background about a person’s ethnicity. Using this information, health care providers can evaluate the risks for many disorders and chronic adult onset conditions like hereditary breast, ovarian, and colorectal cancers.

Common diseases such as cancer, heart disease, and diabetes can run in families. Family members share genes, environment, lifestyles

and behaviors, the combination of which can determine the risk of common diseases.

Take time to learn your family’s health history and then be

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sure to share this information with your health care provider. Based on your family health history, your health care provider will be able to evaluate potential health risks and recommend appropriate screening or treatment.

A variety of materials and tools are available online to help you ask the right questions and collect information about your family's health. MDHHS family health history fact cards available for order online at [http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdch/ResourcesOrderForm\\_344669\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdch/ResourcesOrderForm_344669_7.pdf).

The Surgeon General's *My Family Health Portrait* tool helps individuals organize, print, and share family history information with a physician. The tool, including a printable version, is available online at <http://www.hhs.gov/programs/prevention-and-wellness/family-health-history/index.html>.

For more information about genetics and cancer, visit <http://www.cancer.org/cancer/cancercauses/geneticsandcancer/index>.



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