

SILVER LININGS



CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)
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FAMILY HEALTH HISTORY

Once again, your Editor is indebted to Jim Miller's wisdom as shared by the weekly e-mail newsletter from Chapman University, courtesy of David Moore and Lindsey Jacobs who are in charge of Development for the University. A reader of Savvy Living, a periodical that David and Lindsey always include in their weekly e-mails to many people in the PSW Region, posed this question to Miller:

"Can a heart attack actually be inherited? I just turned 55 and am trying to make some healthy changes. I would like to know if tracing my family's health history is worth the effort?"

Miller responded as follows below and continues onto the next page.

"Just as you can inherit your father's height or your mother's hair color, you can also inherit their genetic risk for diseases such as heart disease, stroke, cancer and diabetes. Here is what you should know.

Health History

Even with all the high-tech tests, medicines and procedures that are available today, an accurate family health history remains one of the most important tools in keeping yourself healthy. Since most diseases have both environmental and genetic components, your family's health history can provide you and your doctor a genetic road-map to your strengths and weaknesses. This information may help you recognize, and even fend off, inheritable diseases in their early stages.

Tracking your History

To collect your family's medical history, you will need some basic medical facts about your parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles and even first cousins. Talk with them and get the specific ages when family members developed health problems like heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer's disease, osteoporosis, asthma, blindness, deafness, depression, alcoholism and more. Also, if family members are deceased, find out when and how they passed away. Some relatives may not want to share their medical histories, or they may not know their family history, but whatever information you discover will be helpful. A good resource to help you find an ancestor's unknown medical history is their death certificate, which you can acquire from the state health department. Your relatives' death certificates will list the cause of death and your relatives' age at death.

Collecting the Information

The upcoming holidays, when many families come together, are a perfect time to collect your family's health history. A great resource to help you get started is the free web-based tool called "My Family's Health Portrait." It is available at familyhistory.hhs.gov.

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Health Portrait." It's available at *familyhistory.hhs.gov*. Using this too, you can organize your family tree, identify genetic risks and even share this information with your family members and doctors. If you do not like using the on-line software, you can print out a hardcopy version to fill out by hand. Tip: If you're adopted, the National Foster Care & Adoption Directory. It's available at: www.childwelfare.gov/nfcad, or call 800-394-3366 for help in locating records of your birth parents to get their medical history.

Increased Risks

Having a parent or sibling with a particular disease does not mean you will get the disease too, But, this risk factor nearly doubles the odds that you could develop the same disease. If two or more cases occur in the same immediate family, the odds can increase by fourfold or more. Some additional factors that can increase your risks are:

- 1) If a family member was diagnosed with a disease 10 to 20 years before the average age of diagnosis, e.g. a family member diagnosed with heart disease at age 35.
- 2) A disease that does not usually affect a certain gender, e.g. breast cancer in men.
3. A family member diagnosed with certain combinations of diseases, e.g. breast and ovarian cancer, or heart disease and diabetes.

Handling Your History

If you discover that a serious health problem runs in your family, do not despair. While you cannot change your genes, you can change your habits to increase your chances of a healthy future. By eating a healthy diet, exercising and not smoking, you can offset and sometimes even neutralize your genetic vulnerabilities. This is especially true for heart disease, strokes, type 2 diabetes and osteoporosis. A family medical history can also alert you to get early and frequent screening tests which can help detect other problems such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol and cancers like breast, ovarian, prostate and colon in their early stages when they are most treatable."

CHRISTMAS MUSIC WILL BE ABUNDANT

As December arrives, many congregations, as well as colleges and community choral/orchestral groups are just about ready to perform the glorious music of Christmas for you and your network of family members, friends and neighbors. If you like Christmas music, take advantage of some of the abundant opportunities in the PSW Region to hear it performed.

One concert that you might consider attending is actually two concerts. On Friday, December 7, Chapman University's College of Performing Arts will present their 55th Annual Holiday Wassail. On Saturday, December 8, this concert will be presented a second time with the option of enjoying a delicious meal on campus before the concert. The concerts, on both nights, will begin at 8 P.M Tickets for the concert alone cost just \$15 for Senior Citizens, plus a \$1 service fee per ticket. These concerts will feature Chapman's outstanding vocal and instrumental performing groups in the beautiful Musco Center for the Arts on campus.

If you've never heard music provided by Chapman students, treat yourself to one of their concerts. But, don't wait too long, because it's very likely that both of them will be sell-outs. Go to Chapman.edu for more information.

FEATURED HYMN

"LIKE A CHILD LOVE
WOULD SEND TO
REVEAL AND TO MEND,
LIKE A CHILD AND A
FRIEND, JESUS COMES;
LIKE A CHILD WE MAY
FIND CLAIMING HEART,
SOUL AND MIND, LIKE A
CHILD STRONG AND
KIND, JESUS COMES.

LIKE A CHILD WE WILL
MEET, RAGGED
CLOTHES, DIRTY FEET,
LIKE A CHILD ON THE
STREET, JESUS COMES;
LIKE A CHILD WE ONCE
KNEW COMING BACK
INTO VIEW, LIKE A
CHILD BORN ANEW,
JESUS COMES.

LIKE A CHILD BORN TO
PRAY AND TO SHOW US
THE WAY, LIKE A CHILD
HERE TO STAY, JESUS
COMES; LIKE A CHILD
WE RECEIVE ALL THAT
LOVE CAN CONCEIVE,
LIKE A CHILD WE
BELIEVE JESUS
COMES."

THE TEXT AND TUNE
FOR THIS ADVENT HYMN
COMES FROM A
CONTEMPORARY HYMN
WRITER, DAN DAMON.
IT'S #133 IN THE
CHALICE HYMNAL. IT IS
ONE OF FIVE HYMNS
WRITTEN BY DAMON
THAT YOU'LL FIND IN
OUR HYMNAL. IF YOU
CHECK IT OUT, I.E. THIS
ADVENT HYMN, YOU
MAY FIND YOU WILL
LIKE IT AS MUCH AS
SOME OF THE MORE
FAMILIAR HYMNS FOR
THE SEASON OF
ADVENT.