

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Celebrate this Year's Family Reunion by Keeping Your Family Healthy
You can help prevent type 2 diabetes by learning your family history

Lansing, Mich.—(July 1, 2010)—Now that summer is finally here, it's time for those barbeques and family reunions you've been waiting for all year. Family reunions in the summertime offer a great chance to bond with relatives, learn about your heritage, share recipes, and celebrate with the whole family. They are also a great opportunity to learn how to keep you and your family healthy for years to come.

It might seem obvious that many family members look alike, but relatives share more in common than just their eye color and good looks. You and your family share genes, behaviors and lifestyles that influence your health and overall quality of life. Having a family history of type 2 diabetes increases your risk for developing the disease. In fact, a person with a family history of diabetes is 2-4 times more likely to develop the disease than someone without a family history. Finding out if the disease runs in your family is the first step toward lowering your risk and improving your health and the health of future generations. When speaking with your family about their health history, the Michigan Department of Community Health recommends looking for these "red flags."

- Many family members with diabetes
- A brother or sister with diabetes
- One or both parents with diabetes

-more-

-Family Reunion (cont.)-

African Americans, Native Americans, and Hispanics also have a higher risk for developing diabetes. You may be at a higher risk for developing the disease if you have:

- Diabetes during pregnancy
- A baby who weighed 9 pounds or more at birth
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Overweight
- Too little physical activity.

When you're at your next family picnic, barbecue or reunion this summer, speak with your family members about their health history. Write this information down and update it from time-to-time. This way, family members will have organized and accurate information ready to share with their health care provider. This information may help health care providers determine which tests and screenings are recommended to help family members know their health risk.

To help individuals collect and organize their family history information, CDC's Office of Public Health Genomics collaborated with the U.S. Surgeon General to develop a Web-based tool called "My Family Health Portrait," see <https://familyhistory.hhs.gov/>. After collecting your family health portrait, pass it on to your loved ones. Share the information with your children and others in your family. Also, tell your health care provider about diabetes in your family and ask whether you need to be screened.

For more information and resources on preventing and managing your diabetes, visit the Diabetes Partners in Action Coalition (DPAC) website at www.dpacmi.org.

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