

## Starr's Story

As a professional genealogist, Starr understands the importance of knowing not only her genealogy but her family health history too - she has survived breast cancer twice. "Having recurrent breast cancer felt like a death sentence. But because I knew my family health history and that four generations of my father's family had died of cancer, I was able to get screened sooner. Now my family talks about our family's health history and uses this knowledge to make better decisions about screening."

Starr recognizes that knowing your family health history is important for your own quality of life. If one of your family members had a disease or health condition that you could inherit, you need to keep a close eye on it. "Family health history impacts my family in many ways. It helps you to be aware of what is going on with your health and to have the right things checked sooner as opposed to later."

For Starr, letting her children and other family members know about the conditions that run in their family is important because if they are at risk and the disease is found early, there is a better chance of survival. "Nobody wants to see their children suffer from a disease that could have been prevented if they had known there was history of it in their family." She knows it can be hard to get your family excited about family health history, but talking about it can help family members understand that this affects not only their life and their health but their children's, too.

Starr also encourages people to learn about their family health history through genealogy. "Most of us probably have some of our family health history in our genealogy records and we don't even know it," said Starr. "Using what you already have can help you start a conversation with your family."



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