

Getting To The Root Of Family Health Problems

(NAPS)—When it comes to family health problems, the apple may not fall far from the tree. A health history tree can be a useful tool to help you identify certain diseases and conditions that may run in your family.

To help women join with family members in learning more about their family's medical history, Pfizer Women's Health has launched GenerationalHealth.com, a computer-generated family health tree. At this site, you can record the medical health data of two generations of relatives. Once a family's medical history information is entered, the family health tree automatically highlights recurring medical conditions. The personalized health tree can then be printed to be shared with family members, if you wish, and discussed with a healthcare professional.

"This type of health information can be critical in identifying certain diseases and conditions that may run in the family," said Raye Lynn Alford, Ph.D., a genetic scientist at Baylor College of Medicine. "A family health tree can be an invaluable tool for recording family health history. This computerized version simplifies the process of recording and updating health information."

The site also provides information on various conditions and diseases that may be hereditary, as well as the role that heredity may play in their development. These conditions include Alzheimer's disease, breast cancer, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, depression, and diabetes. The site also features suggestions on what can be done to focus on prevention, including potential risk factors, early detection, and management of these conditions.

Diseases that tend to run in families include:

- **Coronary heart diseases, the leading cause of death among American women**
- **Depression, which is about twice as common among women as among men**
- **Diabetes, which is associated in women with a 3 to 7 times greater risk for coronary heart disease than people without diabetes**



GenerationalHealth.com offers a list of resources as well as links to Web sites of health organizations, such as the American Cancer Society, Breast Cancer Resource Center, the Alzheimer's Association, the American Psychiatric Association, and others.

"GenerationalHealth.com allows the visitor to easily create a health history that can help families record and identify certain conditions and diseases that have affected them," stated Ruth Merkatz, R.N., Ph.D., Director of Pfizer Women's Health. "By helping us to learn more about our family's health, GenerationalHealth.com may increase interest in adopting healthy behaviors, identifying the early symptoms of certain hereditary diseases, and seeking treatment when necessary."

Some diseases with a genetic component, such as diabetes and cardiovascular diseases, may pose serious health risks to women. Through its support of research, advocacy, and education, Pfizer Women's Health strives to provide health information and valuable tools to help women around the world live healthier lives. For more information on Pfizer Women's Health, visit www.PfizerWomensHealth.com, or call 1-800-361-3546, extension 105.

Note to Editors: References:

1. Mosca L, Manson JE, Sutherland SE, Langer RD, Manolio T, Barrett-Connor E. Cardiovascular disease in women. A statement for healthcare professionals from the American Heart Association. *Circulation* 1997;96: 2468-2482.

2. Endicott J, Weissman NM, Yonkers KA. What's unique about depression in women? *Patient Care*. August 15, 1996:104-115.