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Family History and why it's important.

If you've ever read anything about getting screened for cancer, you know that family health history can play a role into how often and when you should get screened. This is just one example of it's important for you to be aware of your pedigree. It's also helpful for your doctor too, though! By looking at this basic information, she can be more aware of conditions you're prone to and notice any early warning signs.

If you're intrigued- check out the new family health history tool on the CDC website a phgkb.cdc.gov. (it means public health genomics knowledge base). The CDC does not make any government record of your data, nor do they allow anyone else to access it.

Check out the tool, and fill out the 15-20 minute questionnaire. And maybe send it to your doctor as well! It might just save your life.

The website again is phgkb.cdc.gov or you can always visit panola.agrilife.org

<https://phgkb.cdc.gov/PHGKB/phgHome.action?action=about>

Are natural products/supplements safer and better for you?

Many people have developed a certain "chemical-phobia" in recent years. Misinformation is spread with the idea that natural products are chemical-free and thus, safer. Chemical does not mean toxic!

In fact, the truth is that EVERYTHING is composed of chemicals. Apples, coffee mugs, even the air we breathe; is made of chemicals.

Now, some chemicals are harmful, of course! Chlorine and isopropyl alcohol, for example. But nature has its share of harmful chemicals as well. Poison ivy, anyone? Snake venom? All found in nature but are harmful to humans!

So next time you look for an over-the-counter supplement or medicine, don't be fooled by the "natural" label.

<https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/know-science/natural-doesnt-mean-better>

It's Flu Shot time!

You may be thinking- Why get the flu shot? I've never had it before! What makes this year any different?

First of all- is the flu going to be around this year even with COVID-19?

Well, it's difficult to say what's going to happen but the CDC does believe it's likely that both COVID and flu viruses will be spreading.

Why is a flu shot important this year?

The CDC recommends that everyone age 6 months and older get a flu shot every year! While a flu vaccine will not protect you from getting COVID-19, it does have many other health benefits- plus it has been shown to reduce the risk of flu illness, hospitalization, and death. Keep in mind that you yourself may be healthy, but others in your life may be more susceptible get ill and have complications from an illness. This year, it's more important than ever that we do everything we can to protect ourselves and our loved ones.

For more information on this HOT topic during the COLD and flu season, visit [cdc.gov/flu](https://www.cdc.gov/flu) or panola.agrilife.org

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/season/protect-your-health.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/season/faq-flu-season-2020-2021.htm>