

Questions to ask your mom

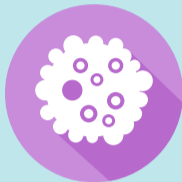


Heart issues

- The risk of heart disease and risk factors for heart disease are strongly linked to family history.
- Heart disease is the #1 killer of women, accounting for 1 in every 4 female deaths.

- Does she have or is she being treated for high blood pressure?
- Does she have or is she being treated for high cholesterol?
- Has she ever had any heart issues that you don't know about (e.g., heart attack, stroke)?

If your mother has a history of any of these risk factors, your doctor will likely keep an eye on your heart health. He or she can also work with you to lower your risk for heart disease.



Breast and ovarian cancer

- Most breast and ovarian cancers happen by chance, but certain types of breast and ovarian cancers can be passed down through families.

- Has she ever had an abnormal mammogram or breast biopsy?
- Has she ever been diagnosed with a type of cancer that you're not aware of?

If your mother has a history of breast or ovarian cancer, you and your doctor may decide that genetic counseling and testing should be done.



Osteoporosis

- Osteoporosis is more common in women. It affects about 25% (1 in 4) of women aged 65 and over.
- Many people with osteoporosis do not know they have it until they break a bone.

- Does she have back pain or has her height or posture changed recently?
- Has she ever fractured or broken a bone?

If you are a woman aged 65 years and over, or between 50 and 64 and have a parent who has broken a hip, your doctor may screen you for osteoporosis.



Pregnancy

- Some research has shown that genetics may play a role in postpartum depression.

- What was her pregnancy like?
- Did she have any symptoms of postpartum depression (e.g., feeling hopeless or worthless, loss of interest in the baby, or thoughts of harming herself or the baby)?

Knowing that your mother had postpartum depression can help alert you and your doctor to the fact that you may be at risk for developing it. He or she can then explore ways to manage it should you experience it.



Menopause

- Research shows that you can probably expect to reach menopause around the same time your mom did.

- When did she go through menopause?
- What was it like for her?

Knowing your mother's experience with menopause can help you know what to expect and can help you work with your doctor to manage menopause symptoms.