

sex education, “going steady,” “living together,” and premarital sex. Phrase questions to reflect concern rather than judgment or criticism of sexual practices.

In any conversation regarding reproductive health history, be aware of the language that is used in either eliciting or conveying sexual information. For example, avoid asking whether the adolescent is “sexually active,” because this term is broadly defined. “Are you having sex with anyone?” is probably the most direct and best understood question. Because same-sex experimentation may occur, refer to all sexual contacts in non-gender terms, such as “anyone” or “partners,” rather than “girlfriends” or “boyfriends.”

Family Health History

The family health history is used primarily to discover any genetic or chronic diseases affecting the child's family members. Assess for the presence or absence of consanguinity (if anyone in the family is related to their spouse's/partner's family). Family health history is generally confined to first-degree relatives (parents, siblings, grandparents, and immediate aunts and uncles). Information includes age, marital status, health status, cause of death if deceased, and any evidence of conditions, such as early heart disease, stroke, sudden death from unknown cause, hypercholesterolemia, hypertension, cancer, diabetes mellitus, obesity, congenital anomalies, allergies, asthma, seizures, tuberculosis, abnormal bleeding, sickle cell disease, cognitive impairment, hearing or visual deficits, and psychiatric disorders (such as, depression or psychosis, and emotional problems). Confirm the accuracy of the reported disorders by inquiring about the symptoms, course, treatment, and sequelae of each diagnosis.

Geographic Location

One of the important areas to explore when assessing the family health history is geographic location, including the birthplace and travel to different areas in or outside of the country, for identification of possible exposure to endemic diseases. Include current and past housing, whether they rent or own, reside in an urban or rural location, the age of the home and whether there are significant threats such as molds or pests within the housing