



Your Personal Preventive Care Manager

Regular checkups are key to early detection and successful treatment of health conditions. But remembering when to get checked for what is difficult. Here's a list of basic and essential health condition screenings that you'll want to schedule with your care providers, along with an explanation of why you need them. (NOTE: These are general guidelines only. Talk to your primary care physician about what's right for you based on your individual needs.)

Eye Exam

Everyone should have an eye exam about every one to two years. A trained healthcare provider examines your eyes for health and to determine if you need glasses or contacts.

Dental Exam

Everyone age 2 and older should have a dental exam once every six to 12 months. Your dentist examines your teeth to detect tooth decay, gum disease, oral cancer and problems with your bite.

Blood Pressure Screening

Everyone 18 and older should have a blood pressure screening once a year. This test, which measures the pressure involved when your heart beats, is important for the detection of high blood pressure, which increases the risk for heart attack, stroke, heart failure and kidney damage.

Pelvic Exam and Pap Test

Women 18 and older (earlier if sexually active) should have a pelvic exam and Pap test once a year. These procedures can detect cancerous and pre-cancerous changes in the cervix. When caught early, the treatment success rate is very high. Based on many "normal" results, your healthcare provider may choose to screen you less often.

Sexually Transmitted Infection Screening

Anyone who is sexually active should be tested for sexually transmitted infection immediately if you experience symptoms, or annually if you have changed partners. Many STIs do not have symptoms but can lead to permanent complications if left untreated. If you are at high risk for STIs, you should get tested more frequently. For women, these tests often are performed during your annual gynecologic exam, but not automatically, so don't forget to ask.

Cholesterol Screening

Everyone 20 and older should have a cholesterol screening at least once every five years. This blood test measures levels of cholesterol and triglycerides in the blood. Based on your health history, your healthcare provider may recommend more or less frequent screenings.

Breast Self-exam

Women 20 and older should perform a breast self-exam once a month. This helps the woman identify changes or unusual breast symptoms early. Your healthcare provider can instruct you on how to perform this exam effectively.

Clinical Breast Exam

Women 20 and older should have a clinical breast exam once every three years until age 40, then once a year after 40. This manual breast exam, performed by a trained healthcare professional, is highly effective at detecting lumps and symptoms of breast cancer that a self-exam might miss.

Mammogram

Women 40 and older should have a mammogram once a year. This (and other) imaging can detect potentially cancerous lumps in the breast tissue earlier than a physical examination can.

Diabetes Screening

Everyone 45 and older (earlier if risk is high) should be screened for diabetes once every three years. This test measures levels of blood glucose after fasting to check for diabetes. People at high risk (those with high blood pressure, high cholesterol or triglycerides, obesity or a family history of diabetes) should get screened more frequently.

Colon and Rectal Cancer Screenings

Everyone 50 and older (earlier if risk is high) should be screened for colon and rectal cancer once a year. Talk to your doctor to determine the best type of screening and testing schedule for you. People at high risk (those with a personal or family history of colon and rectal cancers, polyps or inflammatory bowel disease) should be screened more frequently.

Prostate Cancer Screening

Men 50 and older (40 if risk is high) should be screened for prostate cancer once a year. With a prostate exam and prostate-specific antigen test, your healthcare provider can detect prostate enlargement or high levels of prostate-specific antigen, which may indicate prostate cancer.

Obesity Screening

Everyone should have a Body Mass Index BMI measurement once a year. BMI is a measure of body fat based on height and weight. Talk to your doctor about yours.

Bone Density Test

Women 65 and older (40 if risk is high) should have a bone density test every two years. This scan measures density of the bones and can detect low bone density or loss of bone mass. You are at increased risk if you have had prior fractures, have a family history of osteoporosis or have taken prednisone.