



Prevention

newsletter ...for the health and well-being
of you and your family.

You need to be proactive to work towards and maintain good health throughout your life. This includes getting regular health screenings, taking preventive medications if necessary and taking other steps for overall good health.

Women: Stay Healthy at Any Age

Establishing and maintaining good health is an ongoing process that you need to take charge of. It is important that you are proactive in managing your health to avoid preventable illnesses and catch other medical conditions early.

Get the Screenings You Need

Screenings look for diseases before you have symptoms. Examples include blood pressure checks and mammograms. You can get some screenings, such as blood pressure readings, in your doctor's office. Others, such as a mammogram, will require you to visit a specialist or hospital. After a screening, ask when you will see the results and who to talk to about them. Here are common screenings you should get:

Breast cancer. Ask your doctor whether a mammogram is right for you based on your age, family history, overall health and personal concerns.

Cervical cancer. Have a Pap smear every one to three years if you are 21 to 65 years old and have been sexually active. If you are older than 65 and recent Pap smears were normal, you do not need a Pap smear. If you have had a hysterectomy for a reason other than cancer, you do not need a Pap smear.

Colorectal cancer. Have a screening for colorectal cancer starting at age 50 (or earlier if you have a family history of colorectal cancer). Several different tests can detect this cancer. Talk to your doctor to decide which is best for you.

Depression. Your emotional health is as important as your physical health. Talk to your doctor about being screened for depression, especially if recently:

- You have felt down, sad or hopeless.
- You have felt little interest or pleasure in things you once enjoyed.

Diabetes. Get screened for diabetes if your blood pressure is higher than 135/80 or if you take medication for high blood pressure. Diabetes (high blood sugar) can cause problems with your heart, brain, eyes, feet, kidneys, nerves and other body parts.

High blood pressure. Starting at age 18, have your blood pressure checked at least every two years. High blood pressure is 140/90 or higher, and can cause stroke, heart attack, kidney and eye problems, and heart failure.

High cholesterol. Starting at age 20, have your cholesterol checked regularly if:

- You use tobacco or are obese.
- You have diabetes or high blood pressure.
- You have a personal history of heart disease or blocked arteries.
- A man in your family had a heart attack before age 50 or a woman before 60.

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HIV. Talk with your doctor about HIV screening if any of these apply to you:

- You have had unprotected sex with multiple partners, or someone who is HIV-infected, bisexual or injects drugs.
- You have injected drugs.
- You are being treated for an STD.
- You had a blood transfusion between 1978 and 1985.

Lung cancer. Ask your doctor about getting screened for lung cancer if you are between age 55 and 80 and have a smoking history.

Osteoporosis (bone thinning). Have a screening at age 65 to make sure your bones are strong. If you are younger than 65, talk to your doctor about whether you should be tested.

Overweight and obesity. The best way to learn if you are overweight or obese is to find your body mass index (BMI). You can find this using a BMI calculator, such as the one found here:

www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/obesity/BMI/bmicalc.htm. If you are overweight or obese, ask your doctor for help changing your behaviors to lose weight, as it leads to diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

Sexually transmitted infections. Sexually transmitted infections can make it hard to get pregnant, may affect your baby and can cause other health problems.

- Get screened for chlamydia and gonorrhea infections if you are age 24 or younger and sexually active. If you are older than 24, talk to your doctor or nurse about whether you should be screened.
- Ask your doctor or nurse whether you should be screened for other sexually transmitted infections.

Take Preventive Medicines if You Need Them

Aspirin. If you are 55 or older, ask your doctor if you should take aspirin to prevent strokes.

Breast cancer drugs. If your mother, sister or daughter has had breast cancer, talk to your doctor about whether you should take medicines to prevent breast cancer.

Estrogen for menopause (hormone replacement therapy). Do not use estrogen to prevent heart disease or other diseases. If you need relief from symptoms of menopause, talk to your doctor.

Immunizations.

- Get a flu shot every year.
- If you are 65 or older, get a pneumonia shot.
- Get tetanus, diphtheria and whooping cough shots, with a tetanus booster after 10 years.
- Talk with your doctor or nurse about whether you need vaccinations. You can also find which ones you need here: www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/easy-to-read/adult.html.

Take Steps to Good Health

- ✓ Be physically active and make healthy food choices. Learn how at www.healthfinder.gov/HealthTopics/Category/everyday-healthy-living.
- ✓ Get to a healthy weight and stay there. Balance the calories you take in from food and drink with the calories you burn off by your activities.
- ✓ Be tobacco free. For tips on how to quit, go to smokefree.gov. To talk to someone about quitting, call the National Quitline: 800-QUITNOW (784-8669).
- ✓ If you drink alcohol, have no more than one drink a day. A standard drink is a 12-ounce beer or wine cooler, a 5-ounce glass of wine or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof distilled spirits.

You know your body better than anyone else. Always tell your doctor or nurse about changes in your health, including your vision and hearing. Ask them about being checked for any condition you are concerned about (such as breast or skin cancer), not just the ones listed here.

Source: The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

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Establishing
and
maintaining
good health
is an
ongoing
process.

