

## Why are preventive health screenings important?

Getting regular screenings from a physician is crucial in preventing health problems. Heart disease, cancer and diabetes are responsible for seven of every 10 American deaths each year. Some of these deaths may have been avoidable had they been diagnosed early.

Preventive services include the following:

- Tests (or screenings) that check general physical health
- Regular measurements of blood pressure and weight
- Immunizations
- Advice regarding diet, exercise, drug use and stress prevention
- Special tests, especially during pregnancy and after age 50, including:
  - Mammograms
  - Prostate exams
  - Colonoscopies
  - Anemia screening
  - Pregnancy wellness checks, such as gestational diabetes screenings
- Mental health counseling

Screenings vary depending on sex and age:

- Adult men and women should have blood pressure and weight checked regularly
- Women should begin to get Pap smears after age 21 or having intercourse for the first time
  - Frequency varies by age
- Women age 65 and older should have bone density tests to check for osteoporosis
  - Women younger than age 65 who are at risk should also be tested
- Between ages 50 and 74, women should have a mammogram every two years to screen for breast cancer
  - Those with risk factors for breast cancer (such as family history) may need to have mammograms more often or start sooner
- Men and women should be tested for colorectal cancer beginning at age 50
  - Tests include colonoscopy, sigmoidoscopy and DNA stool check
  - Frequency of screenings depends on individual risk
- Men age 35 and older should have their cholesterol levels checked regularly

The right preventive care can help reduce health care costs in the long term, avoid or delay health issues, and increase workforce productivity. For more information on recommended screenings, contact your physician.

### Resources

- Center for Disease Control and Prevention: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)
- Healthcare.gov: [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov)
- Healthfinder.gov: <http://healthfinder.gov>

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