



Men's Health Preventive Screenings, Part I

Preventive care, including regular doctor visits, is important for everyone. The following screenings are recommended for men to maintain good health and catch health problems early:

Body Measurement

The American Heart Association recommends that men over age 20 have body measurements taken every two years, although your frequency may vary based on age and existing medical conditions. Measuring height, weight, waist and body mass index will determine whether you are overweight or obese and if your weight is a threat to your health. Overweight people are more likely to develop Type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure and increase their risk for other serious conditions.

Blood Pressure

Men should receive blood pressure screenings at least every two years. Preventive screening of blood pressure can lead to early detection of high blood pressure. The cuff placed around the arm during a blood pressure screening measures the amount of pressure the heart generates when pumping blood through the arteries (systolic pressure), and the amount of pressure in the arteries when the heart is at rest between beats (diastolic pressure). Narrowed arteries limit the flow of blood.

In general, the more blood your heart pumps and the narrower your arteries are, the harder your heart must

work to pump the same amount of blood. The longer high blood pressure goes undetected and untreated, the higher the risk of heart attack, stroke, heart failure and kidney damage.

Cholesterol Screening

Men age 20 or older should have their cholesterol tested every five years or more frequently if the doctor recommends it. High levels of cholesterol raise the risk of

heart attack and stroke. Cholesterol is a form of fat carried in the blood by lipoproteins. Low-density lipoprotein (LDL or "bad" cholesterol) deposits cholesterol on the artery walls. High-density lipoprotein (HDL or "good" cholesterol) carries cholesterol away from the arteries to the liver for disposal. Problems occur when LDL deposits too much cholesterol on the artery walls, or when HDL does not take enough away. This can lead to a buildup of cholesterol-containing fatty deposits (plaques) in the arteries, a condition known as atherosclerosis.

Fasting Blood Sugar

The fasting blood sugar test measures the level of sugar (glucose) in the blood after fasting for eight hours. High glucose levels can be an indication of diabetes. The American Diabetes Association recommends a blood sugar test every three years for men aged 35 and older. If you are at risk for diabetes, your doctor may perform these tests at an earlier age, and more frequently. You should also receive a blood sugar test if you experience symptoms of diabetes such as excessive thirst, frequent urination, unexplained weight loss, fatigue or slow-healing cuts or bruises.



Men's Health: Preventive Screenings – Part 2

Colorectal Cancer Screening

Colorectal cancer screening tests detect cancerous cells and growths, or polyps, that may become cancerous on the inside wall of the colon. Not everyone needs to be tested for colon cancer, though; the need depends on individual risk level. Three major factors influence the risk for colon cancer:

- Age 45 or older
- A family or personal history of colorectal cancer or precancerous polyps
- A personal history of inflammatory bowel disease

If you have these higher risk factors for developing colon cancer, the American Cancer Society (ACS) suggests talking with your doctor about screenings.

Prostate Cancer Screening

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer (besides skin cancer) in American men. As men age, their risk of prostate cancer increases. The ACS suggests that men age 50 and older speak to their doctor about prostate screenings. Consider initiating this talk at an earlier age if you are African-American or have a family history of prostate cancer.

Testicular Exam

Testicular cancer is the most common type of tumor in American men between the ages of 15 and 35. For this reason, all men should receive a testicular examination every time they have a physical exam. In addition,

men of all ages, beginning in their teens, should perform a monthly self-examination of their testicles. Testicular exams should check for any masses, as well as changes in size, shape or consistency. For more information about how to do a proper self-exam, visit the Testicular Cancer Resource Center at thetcrc.org/tcexam.

Dental Exam

The American Dental Association recommends regular dental checkups in which the dentist examines the teeth and gums. In addition, the dentist can evaluate bite and determine problems such as teeth grinding or issues with the jaw joint.

Eye Exam

Eye examinations can determine a need for glasses or contact lenses or a need for a changed prescription. They can also identify new vision problems. Common vision problems detected by regular eye exams include glaucoma, macular degeneration and cataracts.

Hearing Test

A hearing test determines potential hearing loss. The American Speech Language Hearing Association recommends screening at least every 10 years through age 50, and every three years thereafter. Ask your

doctor how often you should have your hearing checked.

Skin Exam

To check for skin cancer, the doctor will examine your skin from head to toe, looking for moles that are irregularly shaped, have varied colors, are asymmetric, are greater than the size of a pencil eraser, or have grown or changed since your last visit. Talk to your doctor about getting a skin exam during your regular checkup, and also perform routine self-exams, looking for any spots or moles that fit the above characteristics.