

The Wellness News

Issue 34, August 2010



National Screening Guidelines

Good health is strongly affected by the lifestyle choices we make. However, in order to make the best possible choices and changes, it is important that we are aware of our personal status or risk for developing different health conditions. Following health screening guidelines and checking different health factors on a regular basis allows us to use preventative care to its most effective extent. So what are the recommended health screening guidelines and how can we use that information to benefit our own health? Here are some of the most common and important screenings for you and your doctor to determine your overall health:

General Health Screenings

Blood Pressure

What: A blood pressure reading will tell you the amount of pressure placed on the walls of your arteries as your heart works to pump blood.

- Below 120/80 is considered normal
- 120-139/80-89 is considered pre-hypertensive
- 140/90 or above is hypertensive
- When: Every office visit; at least once each year

Why: Hypertension (high blood pressure) increases your risk for a stroke or heart attack. Being aware of the condition is the first step to controlling it.

Cholesterol

What: A cholesterol test is a blood test that measures the fats in your blood. The test usually includes values for total cholesterol, HDL (good cholesterol), LDL (bad cholesterol), cholesterol ratio, and triglycerides.

- Total Cholesterol: Aim for below 200 mg/dL
- HDL: Above 60 mg/dL
- LDL: Below 130 mg/dL
- Cholesterol Ratio (determined by dividing TC/HDL): At least below 5:1 and ideally 3.5:1
- Triglycerides: Below 150 mg/dL

When: After the age of 20, have your cholesterol checked every 5 years. If you have diabetes, high blood pressure, a family history of heart disease, or smoke, have it checked more often.

Why: High cholesterol puts you at risk for serious illness, including strokes and heart attacks.

Talk to your doctor about other health screenings that might be helpful for you: Colonoscopy, Pap Smear, Mammogram, Skin Cancer, Eye Exams, Sexually Transmitted Infections, Depression

The Wellness News

More...

National Screening Guidelines

Obesity

What: Measure your height and weight, then plug the information into a BMI calculator or chart to determine if you are at a healthy weight.

- Below 18.5: Underweight
- 18.5-24.9: Healthy weight
- 25-29.9: Overweight
- Above 30: Obese

When: At least once each year

Why: Obesity puts you at risk for serious health conditions, including heart disease, diabetes, and metabolic syndrome

Diabetes

What: After fasting for at least eight hours, a blood glucose test will determine the amount of glucose in your blood. If there is a high reading, a second test will be given.

- Below 69: Abnormally Low
- 70 - 99 mg/dL: Normal
- 100 - 125 mg/dL: Prediabetes
- 126 mg/dL or above: Diabetes

When: Get screened after age 20 if you have high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity, or have a

family history of diabetes. After age 45, get screened every 3 years.

Why: Diabetes complications can result in all sorts of serious health issues, from seizures to cardiovascular disease to permanent eye damage. Being aware of the condition and steps to control it are the best ways to prevent complications.

Screenings for Men

Prostate Cancer

What: Prostate specific antigen (PSA) is a protein secreted by the prostate gland. A PSA test measures the amount of PSA in the blood. Although PSA levels naturally increase as a man ages, elevated levels can indicate prostate cancer and other prostate health issues.

- Normal: Below 4.0 ng/ml
- Abnormal: 4.0 ng/ml and 10.0 ng/ml

When: Men over the age of 50 should be tested every year. If at high risk of developing prostate cancer, for example family history, testing should start at age 40.

Why: Although still a somewhat controversial screening, early prostate cancer detection decreases mortality rates.

Screenings for Women

Bone Density

What: A bone density test scans bones located in the hip and wrist to detect the amount of bone minerals, such as calcium, present in the bone. Your bones will be given a T-score, which is your bone density compared to a healthy young adult's bones.

- T-score of 0 to -1: Normal
- Between -1 and -2.5: Osteopenia
- Below -2.5: Osteoporosis

When: Ask your doctor for a bone density test at age 65. If you have other risk factors, including prior fractures or a family history of osteoporosis, consider getting screened earlier.

Why: This test can indicate osteoporosis and predict risk of breaking or fracturing bones. Being aware of your results can help you take steps toward healthier bones.



Call Your Health Coach for More Information 1-800-433-2320

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/health-screening/WO00112>,
<http://healthfinder.gov/prevention/PrintTopic.aspx?topicID=20>,
http://www.ahealth.org/App_pdfs/healthscreeningguide.pdf,
http://www.marshfieldclinic.org/patients/?page=wellness_adultscreening