

Men—Stay Healthy at Any Age: Checklist for Your Next Checkup

What can you do to stay healthy and prevent disease? You can get certain screening tests, take preventive medicine if you need it, and practice healthy behaviors.

Top health experts from the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force suggest that when you go for your next checkup, talk to your doctor or nurse about how you can stay healthy no matter what your age.

Screening tests: what you need and when

Screening tests, such as colorectal cancer tests, can find diseases early when they are easier to treat. Some men need certain screening tests earlier, or more often, than others. Talk to your doctor about which of the tests listed below are right for you, when you should have them, and how often. The Task Force has made the following recommendations, based on scientific evidence, about which screening tests you should have.

- **Cholesterol checks**—Have your cholesterol checked at least every five years, starting at age 35. If you smoke, have diabetes or if heart disease runs in your family, start having your cholesterol checked at age 20.
- **Blood pressure**—Have your blood pressure checked at least every two years.
- **Colorectal cancer tests**—Begin regular screening for colorectal cancer starting at age 50. Your doctor can help you decide which test is right for you. How often you need to be tested will depend on which test you have.
- **Diabetes tests**—Have a test to screen for diabetes if you have high blood pressure or high cholesterol.
- **Depression**—If you've felt "down," sad or hopeless, and have felt little interest or pleasure in doing things for two weeks straight, talk to your doctor about whether he can screen you for depression.
- **Sexually transmitted diseases**—Talk to your doctor to see whether you should be screened for sexually transmitted diseases, such as HIV.
- **Prostate cancer screening**—Talk to your doctor about the possible benefits and harms of prostate cancer screening if you are considering having a prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test or digital rectal examination (DRE).

Should you take medicines to prevent disease?

- **Aspirin**—Talk to your doctor about taking aspirin to prevent heart disease if you are older than 40, or if you are younger than 40 and have high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes or if you smoke.
- **Immunizations**—Stay up-to-date with your immunizations:
 - Have a flu shot every year starting at age 50.
 - Have a tetanus-diphtheria shot every 10 years.
 - Have a pneumonia shot once at age 65 (you may need it earlier if you have certain health problems, such as lung disease).
 - Talk to your doctor to see whether you need hepatitis B shots.

What else can you do to stay healthy?

- **Don't smoke.** But if you do smoke, talk to your doctor about quitting. You can take medicine and get counseling to help you quit. Make a plan and set a quit date. Tell your family, friends and co-workers you are quitting. Ask for their support.
- **Eat a healthy diet.** Eat a variety of foods, including fruit, vegetables, animal or vegetable protein (such as meat, fish, chicken, eggs, beans, lentils, tofu or tempeh) and grains (such as rice). Limit the amount of saturated fat you eat.
- **Be physically active.** Walk, dance, ride a bike, rake leaves or do any other physical activity you enjoy. Start small and work up to a total of 20 to 30 minutes most days of the week.
- **Stay at a healthy weight.** Balance the number of calories you eat with the number you burn off by your activities. Remember to watch portion sizes. Talk to your doctor if you have questions about what or how much to eat.
- **Drink alcohol only in moderation.** If you drink alcohol, have no more than two drinks a day. (A standard drink is one 12-ounce bottle of beer or wine cooler, one 5-ounce glass of wine, or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof distilled spirits.)

Screening test checklist

Take this checklist with you to your doctor's office and fill it out when you have had any of the tests listed below. Talk to your doctor about when you should have these tests next, and note the month and year in the right-hand column.

Also, talk to your doctor about which of the other tests listed below you should have in the future, and when you need them.

PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST

	The last time I had the following screening test was: (mm/yy)	I should schedule my next test for: (mm/yy)
Cholesterol		
Blood pressure		
Colorectal cancer		
Sexually transmitted diseases		
Prostate cancer		

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Agency for Healthcare