

Women: Stay Healthy at Any Age

To stay healthy and prevent disease, you can get certain screening tests, take preventive medicine if you need it, and practice healthy behaviors. When you go for your next checkup, talk to your health care provider about how you can stay healthy no matter what your age.

SCREENING TESTS: WHAT YOU NEED AND WHEN

Screening tests, such as mammograms and Pap smears, can find diseases early when they are easier to treat. Talk to your health care provider about which of the tests listed below are right for you, when you should have them, and how often.

- **Mammograms:** Have a mammogram every 1 to 2 years starting at age 40.
- **Pap Smears:** Have a Pap smear every 1 to 3 years if you have been sexually active or are older than 21.
- **Cholesterol Checks:** Have your cholesterol checked regularly starting at age 45. 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 2 years.
- **Colorectal Cancer Tests:** Have a test for colorectal cancer starting at age 50. Your health care provider can help you decide which test is right for you.
- **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 2 weeks straight, talk to your health care provider about whether he or she can screen you for depression.
- **Osteoporosis Tests:** Have a bone density test at age 65 to screen for osteoporosis (thinning of the bones). If you are between the ages of 60 and 64 and weigh 154 lbs. or less, talk to your health care provider about whether you should be tested.
- **Chlamydia Tests and Tests for Other Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs):** Be tested for Chlamydia and other STIs if you are 25 or younger and sexually active. If you are older, talk to your health care provider to see whether you should be tested.

SHOULD YOU TAKE MEDICINES TO PREVENT DISEASE?

- **Hormones:** Talk to your health care provider about whether starting or continuing to take hormones is right for you.
- **Breast Cancer Drugs:** If your mother, sister, or daughter has had breast cancer, talk to your health care provider about the risks and benefits of taking medicines to prevent breast cancer.
- **Aspirin:** Talk to your health care provider about taking aspirin to prevent heart disease if you are older than 45 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.
 - Talk to your health care provider 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 health care provider about quitting. If you are pregnant and smoke, quitting now will help you and your baby.
- **Eat a Healthy Diet.** Eat a variety of foods, including fruit, vegetables, animal or vegetable protein and grains. 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 20-30 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 health care provider if you have questions about what or how much to eat.
- **Drink Alcohol Only in Moderation.** If you drink alcohol, one drink a day is safe for women, unless you are pregnant. According to the U.S. Surgeon General, there is no safe amount, time, or type of alcohol to drink during pregnancy.
- **Keep Your Mouth Healthy.** Be sure to get a dental checkup every 6 months.