



Preventive care for men

4 ways to help reduce your risk of health problems



We understand the importance of keeping yourself and your family healthy. Men: you can help lower your risk of health problems by following these preventive steps.

1 Receive regular screenings

Health screenings can help prevent many health problems, and help find problems early, which often leads to better results. That is why it's so important to receive an annual physical from your primary care doctor. At your next checkup, ask your doctor about any of these screenings you might need.

Type of test	When to have it and why ¹
Blood pressure reading	If you are age 18 to 40 and you aren't at higher risk for high blood pressure, you should have your blood pressure checked every three to five years. If you are age 40 or older, or if you are at higher risk for high blood pressure, have your blood pressure checked once a year.
Colon cancer screening	If you are age 50 to 75, receive regular testing for colorectal cancer. You may need to begin regular testing before age 50 if colorectal cancer runs in your family. There are different ways to test for colorectal cancer. Your doctor can help you decide which test is best for you.
Testing for type 2 diabetes	If you are overweight or have other risk factors for type 2 diabetes, like a family history of diabetes, ask your doctor to test you for diabetes.
Depression test	All adults older than 18 years should be routinely screened for depression. Screening for depression refers to medical professionals asking about symptoms of depression, even if patients do not mention any symptoms. These can include feeling sad, hopeless, tired, or distracted, as well as losing interest in activities.
Hepatitis C blood test	Everyone born between 1945 and 1965 should be screened for the hepatitis C virus. If you have risk factors for hepatitis C or had a blood transfusion before 1992, ask your doctor if you should be tested.
HIV testing	All adults should be tested for HIV at least once. You may need to be tested more often, depending on your risk.
Sexually transmitted infections	Talk with a doctor about testing you may need.
Prostate cancer screening	The decision about whether to be screened for prostate cancer should be an individual one. If you are age 55 to 69, you should talk to your doctor about the potential benefits and harms of prostate-specific antigen (PSA)-based screening for prostate cancer.



2 Stay up-to-date with your shots

- Receive the seasonal flu vaccine every year. It is the best way to protect yourself and others from the flu.
- Make sure you have the Tdap shot to protect against tetanus, diphtheria, and whooping cough (pertussis). Everyone needs to receive the Tdap shot once.
- After you receive a Tdap shot, you should then have a Td shot every 10 years to stay protected against tetanus and diphtheria.
- If you are age 60 or older, ask your doctor about shots to protect against diseases like pneumonia and shingles.

3 Ask your doctor about medicines to prevent heart attacks and strokes

Based on your age and health history, your doctor may recommend taking a medicine to help reduce your risk for a heart attack or stroke.^{2,3}

Statins

Statins are a type of medicine that helps lower or prevent high cholesterol. The most recent guidelines from the American College of Cardiology and the American Heart Association recommend taking statins if you have risk factors such as:

- A history of heart disease, heart attack, or stroke
- High cholesterol
- Type 2 diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Obesity
- A history of smoking

Low-dose aspirin

Your doctor might prescribe low-dose, or “baby,” aspirin if you:

- Have already had a heart attack or stroke.
- Are age 40 to 70 and have any of the risk factors listed above.

Taking low-dose aspirin, however, is not recommended for anyone at an increased risk of internal bleeding, so it is important to share your full health history with your doctor.

4 Develop a healthy lifestyle

- **Seek help to quit smoking.** If you smoke, ask your doctor about services to help you quit.
- **Eat a healthful diet.** If your doctor has told you that you are at risk for heart disease or diabetes, ask about dietary counseling. Focus on a healthy diet, including at least five servings of fruits and vegetables daily.
- **Maintain a healthy weight.** If you are overweight, ask your doctor about screening and counseling for obesity.



Ask your doctor about what screenings and vaccines are right for you, and other ways to live a healthier life.

1 Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion: *My Healthfinder* (accessed October 2020): health.gov/myhealthfinder.

2 ScienceDaily: *ACC/AHA guidance for preventing heart disease, stroke released* (accessed October 2020): sciencedaily.com.

3 Healthline: *Should You Take a Low Dose Aspirin Every Day?* (accessed October 2020): healthline.com.

4 American Academy of Family Physicians: *What You Can Do to Maintain Your Health* (accessed October 2020): familydoctor.org.

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