

Preventive Care for Women: Your plan

What is preventive care?

Preventive care is what you do to keep from getting sick or to keep a sickness from getting worse. It means taking small actions now, when you may not have an illness or symptoms. To get good preventive care, you need to:

- 1 Know your risk factors
- 2 Have regular health checks
- **3** Get screened for cancer
- 4 Get immunized
- **5** Practice healthy habits

A preventive care visit with your doctor is a separate visit. It is not done at the same time as a visit for a recent or an ongoing condition.

Why is preventive care important?

Preventive care puts you in charge of your health. It lets you gauge your health today, and find out ways to protect it for the future. Preventive care helps you:

- Prevent disease
- Catch disease early, when more can be done about it
- Save time, money, and stress in the long run

Using this plan

Preventive care doesn't have to be difficult. In fact, most of the things you need to do only once, or not very often. This fact sheet will help you learn what to do, when to do it, and where to go. Here's how to get started:

- Fill out the checklist at right to learn more about your personal risks.
- See pages 2 and 3 to learn more about the tests, screenings, and immunizations. These are covered by most insurance programs at no cost to members.
- See page 4 to review your everyday habits and to make a plan for simple things you can do right away.



1. Know your risk factors

Risk factors are conditions or habits that make you more likely to get a disease. If you know your risk factors, you know what you need to be especially careful about. Your risk factors are influenced by these things:

• Your personal health history. Mark the conditions that have been a problem for you in the past.				
\square High blood pressure	☐ High glucose/diabetes			
\square High cholesterol	☐ Cancer, type:			
☐ Overweight	\square Low bone density			
☐ Signs of depression	☐ Glaucoma			
☐ Signs of cardiovascular	☐ Signs of cardiovascular disease			
 Your family history. List diseases that have affected family members. What? Who? At what age? 				
• Your lifestyle. Mark risky habits that apply to you.				
\square Lack of physical activity, or long periods of sitting				
☐ Tobacco use				

☐ Alcohol use (more than 1 drink a day)

2. Have regular health checks. These health checks provide information about your overall health. When you know this information, you and your doctor can make a plan for what to do about it.

HEALTH CHECK	WHEN and WHERE	YOUR RESULTS	
Blood pressure High blood pressure can strain your arteries and heart, and can restrict blood flow to and from other body organs. This can lead to heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, and other problems.	 Check at least every 2 years, or at every office visit. This can be done in many places. If BP is high, check at medical office to confirm and treat. 	Blood pressure / Date Normal range: less than 120/80 Borderline high: between 120/80 and 140/90 High: 140/90 or higher	
Blood cholesterol High cholesterol puts you at risk for heart attack and stroke. The most accurate cholesterol tests require you to fast for 12 hours first.	 Check at least every 5 years, more often if you have heart disease or other risk factors. Have this done by a healthcare provider. 	Total Cholesterol Date HDL LDL What counts as normal depends on your other risk factors. Discuss your results with your doctor. Normal High	
Body mass index (BMI) and waistline BMI is a formula that uses your height and weight to estimate your body fat. Even if your BMI is normal, extra fat around your waist can lead to health problems. Try to keep your waistline under 35 inches.	Check every year. You can do this yourself. Find a BMI calculator or chart online or in a book. Measure your own waist.	BMI Date Normal range: BMI between 18.5 and 25, and waist below 35 inches Overweight: between 25 and 30, or waist over 35 inches Obese: 30 and above or waist over 35 inches Date Getting enough activity: you exercise at least 150 minutes a week (30 minutes most days) Need to get more physical activity: you exercise less than that Date Not at risk: you answered no to both questions At risk: you answered yes to one or both questions — talk to your doctor	
Physical activity Ask yourself these two questions: On average, how many days a week do you do physical activity or exercise (such as a brisk walk)? On average, how many total minutes of physical activity or exercise do you do on those days?	Your doctor will also ask you these questions.		
Depression Ask yourself these two questions: - During the past month, have I been bothered by feeling down, depressed, or hopeless? - During the past month, have I been bothered by feeling little interest or pleasure in doing things?	 Check when you feel it's necessary. You can do this yourself or talk with your doctor. 		
Glucose (blood sugar). High glucose puts you at risk for diabetes and for certain hormone problems.	 Check only if your doctor recommends. Have this done by a healthcare provider. 	Fasting blood glucose Date Normal range: between 70 and 100 Prediabetes: between 100 and 125 Diabetes: over 125	
Glaucoma Glaucoma is a condition where fluid pressure inside your eye slowly rises and damages your optic nerve. It's a leading cause of blindness.	 Check every 2 years starting at age 65; start at age 40 if at high risk. See an optometrist or ophthalmologist. 		
Bone density Bone density tests check your risk for osteoporosis, a condition that makes your bones fracture more easily.	 Check one time after age 65. Have this done by a healthcare provider. 	Date □ Normal □ Risk of osteoporosis □ Osteoporosis	
Chlamydia Chlamydia is a sexually transmitted infection. It can cause pain, fever, and (rarely) sterility.	 Check yearly between ages 19 and 24, or if doctor recommends Have this done by a healthcare provider. 	Date ☐ Have chlamydia ☐ Don't have chlamydia	
Hepatitis C Hepatitis C is a contagious liver disease. If left untreated, it can lead to serious liver problems or liver cancer.	 Check once if you were born between 1945 and 1965. Have this done by a healthcare provider. 	Date ☐ Have hepatitis C ☐ Don't have hepatitis C	

3. Get screened for cancer. If you catch cancer early enough, there's usually a lot you can do to get rid of it or slow it. If you catch it too late, it's often deadly. Getting screened gives you more control.

CANCER SCREENING	WHEN and WHERE	YOUR RESULTS
Colon cancer There are 3 different types of screening tests, all done on different schedules. If you've had a positive test in the past, they need to be done more often than recommended here.	 Check between ages 50 and 75. Start earlier (usually 40) if you have a family history of colon cancer: Stool check every year, OR Sigmoidoscopy every 5 yrs, OR Colonoscopy every 10 yrs. Call your insurance provider to find out where to go. 	Date Type of test Results
Breast cancer Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women. Here are three ways to screen for it: Get to know your how your breasts normally look and feel so you can report any changes to your doctor. Visit a hospital or clinic for a mammogram. Do this before your regular doctor visit, so your doctor can discuss the results. Have your doctor check your breasts.	 Have your doctor check every 1 to 3 years until age 40, then every year after 40. Get a mammogram every year, starting at 40. Call your insurance provider for where to have a mammogram. 	Date Doctor check Mammogram Results
Cervical Screening for cervical cancer involves a Pap test and a pelvic examination.	 Between ages 21 and 29, screen every 3 yrs; from age 30 to 65, test Pap every 3 yrs. OR Pap and HPV together every 5 yrs. Test more often if any test is positive. Have this done by a healthcare provider. 	Date Results
Skin cancer Skin cancer is most often caught during a self check. Look and feel for moles or freckles that are irregular in color or shape, or are changing in shape or size.	If you notice changes, see your doctor for screening.	Date Home check Doctor check Results

4. Get immunized. Immunizations can be done in a doctor's office, or at a state or local health department. Flu immunizations are also available at many grocery stores and workplaces.

IMMUNIZATION WHEN **COMPLETED DATES** Every fall or winter Completed **Flu** is a virus that changes every year, so the immunization you got last year won't help this year. Flu is a serious illness. Every year many Date Date people end up in the hospital, and some die from the flu. ■ Date____ Date • One time before 65 if you smoke or Pneumonia is an infection in your lungs that is usually caused Completed date ____ have asthma, COPD, heart disease, by a type of bacteria. It's a serious illness, especially among or diabetes older adults. • After age 65, one dose Prevnar and one dose Pneumovax, a year apart □ Completed date • Before age 26 **HPV** is an immunization against human papilloma virus. Genital HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection, and can cause cervical cancer. It is given as a series of 3 doses over a period of 6 months. □ Completed date ____ • Every 10 years **Td booster or Tdap** immunize against tetanus and diphtheria, which are both uncommon now. The bacteria that cause them are still common, though, and the illnesses can be life threatening. • One time after age 60 □ Completed date __ **Zoster*** is an immunization against shingles, a painful rash. Other immunizations,* including HepB, chicken pox, and MMR, If not completed as a child ■ Completed should be completed if you didn't have them as a child.

^{*}May not be covered by Medicare.

5.	Practice healthy habits.	Above all, having healthy habits every day is the best thing you can do to
	maintain good health and energy.	The habits below are important. Mark how you're doing.

	Doing great	Need to do better
• Get at least 150 minutes physical activity per week. Reduce time sitting	g. 🔲	
• Eat 2 cups of fruit and 2 to 3 cups of vegetables every day.		
• Sleep 7 to 8 hours every night.		
• Don't use tobacco.		
• Limit alcohol to 1 drink a day or fewer.		
• Wear a seat belt when driving or a helmet when riding.		

Next steps

It may seem like there's a lot to think about here. Preventive care doesn't have to be difficult, though. Look at each step and write down one small thing you can do to get started. Then pat yourself on the back!

Make a list of simple things you can do right away

- 1 Know your risk (For example, ask your mother at what age she started taking cholesterol medication.)
- **2** Have regular health checks (For example, have your blood pressure checked next time you're at a medical office.)
- **3 Get screened for cancer** (For example, call your insurance company and find out where you can go for a colonoscopy.)
- **4 Get immunized** (For example, if it's fall or winter, get a flu shot.)
- **5 Practice healthy habits** (*For example, go for a walk or a run today.*)

Be sure to follow your doctor's recommendations

Based on your tests and screenings, your doctor may recommend activities, diet changes, or medications. Follow these recommendations to help you prevent illness and to have your best possible health and energy.

