
Preventive care guidelines

Regular checkups are key to early detection and successful treatment of health conditions. Here is a list of essential health condition screenings you will want to schedule with your care providers, along with an explanation of why you need them. **NOTE: These are general guidelines only. Talk to your primary care doctor about what's right for you.**

Eye exam

Everyone should have an eye exam each year or two. A trained health care provider examines your eyes for health and to determine if you need glasses or contacts.

Dental exam

Everyone ages 2 and older should have a dental exam every 6–12 months. Your dentist examines your teeth to detect tooth decay, gum disease, oral cancer and problems with your bite.

Cervical cancer screening (women only)

A Pap test is recommended regularly for all women ages 21–30 and a Pap test with HPV testing for women ages 30–65. Depending on the test results, screening is recommended every 3–5 years.

Sexually transmitted infection (STI) screening

All people who are sexually active should be tested for sexually transmitted infection immediately if they have symptoms or annually if they have changed partners. Many STIs do not have symptoms but can lead to permanent complications if left untreated. If you are at high risk for STIs, get tested more often.

Cholesterol screening

Everyone 20 and older should have a cholesterol screening at least every 5 years. This test measures levels of cholesterol and triglycerides in the blood. Based on your health history, your provider may recommend more frequent screenings.

Mammogram (women only)

Women ages 40–74 should have a mammogram once every other year or more frequently if recommended by their doctor. This (and other) imaging can detect potentially cancerous lumps in the breast tissue earlier than a physical examination can.

Diabetes screening

Everyone 45 and older (earlier if risk is high) should be screened for diabetes every 3 years. This test measures levels of blood sugar after fasting to check for diabetes. People at high risk (those with high blood pressure, high cholesterol or triglycerides, who are obese, or have a family history of diabetes) should get screened more often.

Colorectal cancer screenings

Everyone 45 and older (earlier if risk is high) should be evaluated for colon and rectal cancer risk every year. Talk to your doctor to determine the best type of screening and testing schedule for you – depending on the method of screening, you may be tested every 1–10 years. People at high risk (those with a personal or family history of colon and rectal cancers, polyps, or inflammatory bowel disease) should be screened more often than those at low risk.

Prostate cancer screening (men only)

Men age 50+ (40 if high risk) should discuss with their doctor if screening for prostate cancer is needed. If you and your provider determine prostate cancer screening is needed, a prostate exam and prostate-specific antigen test may detect prostate enlargement or high levels of prostate-specific antigen, which may indicate prostate cancer.

Abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA) screening (men only)

A one-time screening for AAA with ultrasonography is recommended for men ages 65–75 who have smoked at any point in their lives.

Lung cancer screening

Annual screening for lung cancer with low-dose computed tomography (LDCT) is recommended for adults ages 50–80 who have a 20 pack-a-year smoking history regardless of timing of quitting smoking.

Bone density test (women only)

Women 65 and older (40 if risk is high) should have a bone density test every 2–5 years. This scan measures density of the bones and can detect low bone density or loss of bone mass. You are at increased risk

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if you have had broken bones in the past, have a family history of osteoporosis, have taken prednisone for extended times or have a very low body mass.

Other preventive wellness visits

Did you know the Yearly Wellness Visit or “check-up” with your doctor can be considered your preventive care visit? It is designed to be an individualized appointment that helps you stay on track with your specific health and lifestyle goals and other medical needs. Please take all your results from your recent wellness screening to your primary care provider for review.

Don't have a primary care provider? Call Prisma Health's Find a Doctor at 1-844-447-3627 (toll free) to be connected with doctors accepting new patients in your area. You can also visit the website at: [PrismaHealth.org/find-a-doctor](https://www.prismahealth.org/find-a-doctor).

Here is a list of items that may be assessed or recommended during your preventive care visit:

Height, weight and measurement of body composition:

These measurements help your doctor manage your health. Body mass and shape can determine your risk of developing future chronic diseases. Examples include body mass index, relative fat mass index and waist-to-hip ratio.

Blood pressure and heart rate: Blood pressure measures systolic pressure (pressure in the blood vessels while the heart is contracting) over diastolic pressure (pressure in the blood vessels when the heart is relaxing). High blood pressure is also called hypertension. Chronic high blood pressure can lead to severe health problems such as heart attack or stroke.

Review of family history: Be prepared to discuss diseases or chronic conditions that run in your family.

Review of personal health reports and concerns: Have you noticed any new problems or symptoms? Evaluate your social environment and health: How much stress do you have at home or work? Do you follow healthy habits such as physical activity, good nutrition and adequate sleep? Are there concerns with alcohol, tobacco use, etc.? What are your social supports?

Review medications: You and your doctor will discuss the effectiveness and side effects of your medications. Always tell your doctor about any medication or supplements you take so that you can avoid bad interactions.

Physical exam: Your doctor will evaluate each organ system. The exam may include special areas of focus depending on your gender and age.

Testing and screenings: This may include blood tests or imaging appropriate for your gender, age and history of chronic conditions. Evidence-based guidelines help doctors determine which screenings are right for you. Make sure to follow up with your doctor's office or MyChart about test results.

Collaborate on developing your health and wellness plan: You can discuss with your doctor your preferences about medical care. Ask for explanations of results or recommendations that are not clear. Be sure to ask what steps you need to take to reach your health goals.