



Must-Have Screening Tests and Why

Part of getting healthy and staying healthy is taking action. There are basic tests every woman needs. It's part of staying healthy as we age.



Bone Density Scan

The strength of bones is measured by their density (thickness). High bone density means bones are less likely to fracture. Unfortunately most women find out they have weak bones after they break one. A DEXA scan is recommended for all women 65 and over. If you have risk factors in addition to menopause you may need to be tested sooner.



Breast Exam and Mammogram

Your provider should do an annual exam. You should do a self-exam at home. The experts recommend adding a mammogram at 40. If you have a family history of breast cancer or dense breasts consider a 3D mammogram and more frequent screenings starting at a younger age.



Colorectal Check

People at average risk for colorectal cancer should begin screening at 50. Most colorectal cancers begin as a polyp. There are several tests used to screen for colorectal cancers: stool DNA test, sigmoidoscopy, standard colonoscopy and virtual colonoscopy. They are divided into tests that can find both colorectal polyps and cancer. Age, medical/family history and general health help determine what test is right for you.



Glaucoma Exam

Family history and age are just of few of the risk factors for getting glaucoma. If you're at high risk, you should have a dilated pupil eye examination every one to two years. An ophthalmologist or optometrist will perform a comprehensive eye exam that may include several different tests.

Most of the techniques are painless and non-invasive. Your doctor will determine which method(s) to use.



High Blood Pressure Check

The key to preventing heart disease is managing your risk factors. As you get older the risk of high blood pressure increases. Controlling it can save your life. Your doctor will check your blood pressure during regular doctor visits.



High Cholesterol Screening

Screening for high cholesterol includes a simple finger-stick screening. This measures three different kinds of lipids in your blood (HDL, LDL and triglycerides) as well as total cholesterol.

In adults with no symptoms, cholesterol screening should take place every five years starting at age 20. Patients with heart disease or abnormal lipid levels should be screened every one to two years. Those on medication to lower cholesterol should be screened every six weeks until lipid goals are met and every four to six months thereafter.



Pelvic Exam and Pap Smear

The guidelines have changed on who needs them and how often. Consult with your provider. Cervical cancer is detected through a Pap test. The early stages have no real symptoms. Pelvic exams and Pap tests are still needed for some well into the 60s.



Skin Check

With early detection and proper treatment the cure rate for basal and squamous cell carcinoma is about 95 percent. When melanoma is detected before it spreads it also has a high cure rate. Regular self-skin exams and a yearly examination by a dermatologist or other health care provider can help people find early skin cancers.

Watch for changes in your skin – new or changing moles, freckles or markings. Look at shapes, colors, borders and size. Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the United States.



Type 2 Diabetes Test

A blood glucose test helps identify type 2 diabetes. A quick and easy finger stick measures sugar levels in your blood following eight hours of fasting.

Diabetes is also a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke. Those who should be tested include: anyone who has risk factors for diabetes, people aged 45 and older, adults with high blood pressure and high cholesterol levels. Individuals age 45 and older should get screened every three years.

Condition	Why It's Important to Have the Condition Screened	Screening Recommendations
Aortic Abdominal Aneurysm (AAA)	A smoking history greatly increases risk. An undetected aneurysm that ruptures has a high mortality rate.	Men between ages 65 and 75 who have ever smoked should have an ultrasound screening for the presence of AAA.
Prostate Cancer	Prostate cancer accounts for 25 percent of all male cancers. Most cases of prostate cancer occur in men older than 50, and two out of three cases are in men over 65.	The American Cancer Society recommends that men begin prostate cancer screening at age 50 with an annual digital rectal exam of the prostate and possible PSA blood test. Men at high risk, such as African-American men or those with a close blood relative who had prostate cancer before age 65, should begin screening at age 45.
Colorectal Cancer	Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the US. Early detection can drastically reduce the likelihood you will die from the disease.	At age 50, men and women at average risk of developing colorectal cancer should talk to their doctor about using one of the following cancer prevention screening test options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colonoscopy every 10 years • CT colonography every five years
Diabetes	Diabetes is associated with long-term complications that affect almost every part of the body. If detected early enough, you can prevent or delay the onset of type 2 diabetes and the complications.	Men and women should be screened for type 2 diabetes if their blood pressure is over 135/80 mm Hg.
High Blood Pressure	High blood pressure increases the risk of stroke, heart attack, heart failure, and other problems. The only way to tell if you have high blood pressure is to have it checked. There are no symptoms.	Male and female adults aged 18 and over should have their blood pressure checked as part of their annual physical. If you have high blood pressure your doctor will determine how often you need to have it checked.
High Cholesterol	High cholesterol causes most of the same problems as high blood pressure.	Starting at age 20 until age 35, men and women should have a cholesterol test if they are at increased risk for heart disease. Starting at age 35 and older, you should have a cholesterol test at your yearly physical.
Lung Cancer	Lung cancer is the third most common cancer and the leading cause of cancer-related death in the U.S.	Annual screening with low-dose computed tomography (LDCT) is recommended for men and women aged 55 to 80 years who have a 30 pack-years smoking history and currently smoke or have quit within the past 15 years.