

Health Check-up for Women ages 40-64

BLOOD PRESSURE SCREENING

Have your blood pressure checked once a year. If the top number (systolic number) is between 120 and 139 or the bottom number (diastolic number) is between 80 and 89 mm Hg or higher, have it checked every year.

If the top number is greater than 140, or the bottom number is greater than 90, schedule an appointment with your provider.

If you have diabetes, heart disease, kidney problems, or certain other conditions, you may need to have your blood pressure checked more often.

Watch for blood pressure screenings in your area. Ask your doctor if you can stop in to have your blood pressure checked.

CHOLESTEROL SCREENING

Begin cholesterol screening between the ages of 40 to 45.

Once cholesterol screening has started, your cholesterol should be checked every 5 years.

If you have high cholesterol levels, diabetes, heart disease, kidney problems, or certain other conditions, you may need to be checked more often.

DIABETES SCREENING

If you are over age 44, you should be screened every 3 years.

If you are overweight, ask your provider if you should be screened at a younger age. Asian Americans should be screened if their BMI is greater than 23.

If your blood pressure is above 135/80 mm Hg, or you have other risk factors for diabetes, your doctor may test your blood sugar level for diabetes.

COLON CANCER SCREENING

If you are under age 50, you should be screened if you have a strong family history of colon cancer or polyps. Screening may also be considered if you have risk factors such as a history of inflammatory bowel disease or polyps.

If you are between ages 50 to 75, you should be screened for colorectal cancer. There are several screening tests available. Some common screening tests include:

- A fecal occult blood (stool-based) test done every year
- Flexible sigmoidoscopy every 10 years, along with a fecal occult blood test every year
- Colonoscopy every 10 years. You may need a colonoscopy more often if you have risk factors for colon cancer, such as ulcerative colitis, a personal or family history of colorectal cancer or a history of growths called adenomatous polyps.

EYE EXAM

Have an eye exam every 2 to 4 years ages 40 to 54 and every 1 to 3 years ages 55 to 64. Your doctor may recommend more frequent eye exams if you have vision problems or glaucoma risk.

Have an eye exam at least every year if you have diabetes.

IMMUNIZATIONS

You might need to get a flu shot every year.

Ask your doctor if you should get a vaccine to reduce your risk of pneumonia.

You should have a tetanus-diphtheria and acellular pertussis (Tap) vaccine once as part of your tetanus-diphtheria vaccines. You should have a tetanus-diphtheria booster every 10 years.

You may get a shingles or herpes zoster vaccine once after age 60.

Your provider may recommend other immunizations if you are at high risk for certain conditions.

PHYSICAL EXAM

Your blood pressure should be checked at least every year.

Your provider may recommend checking your cholesterol every 5 years if you have risk factors for coronary heart disease.

Your height, weight, and body mass index (BMI) should be checked at each exam.

During your exam, your doctor may ask you about:

- Depression
- Diet and exercise
- Alcohol and tobacco use
- Safety issues, such as using seat belts and smoke detectors

BREAST EXAM

Women may do a monthly breast self-exam. However, experts do not agree about the benefits of breast self-exams in finding breast cancer or saving lives. Talk to your provider about what is best for you.

You should contact your provider immediately if you notice a change in your breasts, whether or not you do self-exams.

Your provider may do a clinical breast exam as part of your preventive exam.

MAMMOGRAM

Women ages 40 to 49 may have a mammogram every 1 to 2 years. However, not all experts agree about the benefits of having a mammogram when women are in their 40s. Talk to your provider about what is best for you.

Women ages 50 to 75 should have a mammogram every 1 to 2 years depending on their risk factors, to check for breast cancer.

Women with a mother or sister who had breast cancer at a younger age should consider yearly mammograms. They should begin earlier than the age at which their youngest family member was diagnosed.

OSTEOPOROSIS SCREENING

All women over age 50 with fractures should have a bone density test (DEXA scan).

If you are under age 65 and have risk factors for osteoporosis, you should be screened.

PELVIC EXAM AND PAP SMEAR

You should have a Pap smear every year. HPV is the virus that causes genital warts and cervical cancer.

Your doctor may do pelvic exams more often if you develop problems.

If you have had your uterus and cervix removed (total hysterectomy), and you have not been diagnosed with cervical cancer, you do not need to have Pap smears.

Women who are sexually active and at high risk should be screened for STDs.

Your doctor will ask you about alcohol and tobacco, and may ask you about depression.

SKIN EXAM

Your provider may check your skin for signs of skin cancer, especially if you're at high risk. People at high risk include those who have had skin cancer before, have close relatives with skin cancer, or have a weakened immune system.

LUNG CANCER SCREENING

The USPSTF recommends annual screening for lung cancer with low-dose computed tomography (LDCT) in adults aged 55 to 80 years who:

Have a 30 pack-year smoking history AND

Currently smoke or have quit within the past 15 years