

HABIT 4: PREVENTIVE HEALTH CARE TESTING

Be sure to check with your health care provider about what tests you should have.



Goal: Verify your immunizations and health care screening tests are up to date or make an appointment to do so. If you have any nagging health concerns, now is the time to pick up the phone and get an appointment.

Preventive services are an important part of improving and maintaining your health care. Screening test results provide a snapshot of your current health and reveal opportunities to make healthy changes. Screening tests can also help detect problems early, which is often the key to successful treatment and possible reversal of worsening of problems. Keep in mind that screening recommendations change periodically. Also, unnecessary screening may lead to unnecessary testing, expenses, labeling or anxiety. Be sure to check with your health care provider about what tests you should have. Below are just a few recommended tests. Click [here](#) to view the list of recommended services customized for your age and gender.

Hypertension Screening: [High blood pressure](#), or hypertension, is a risk factor for heart disease and stroke. All adults age 18 years and over should have their blood pressure measured at least every 2 years, and more often if it is above normal (120/80 mm Hg). Fortunately, [changing your lifestyle](#) can go a long way toward preventing or controlling high blood pressure.

Diabetes Screening: If you have diabetes, it means you have too much glucose in your blood and that can lead to serious health problems. A fasting blood glucose test is recommended every 3 years for all adults age 45 or over and for all adults age 18 and older with a history of hypertension or a [body mass index](#) > 25 kg/m². [Careful management](#) of diabetes can reduce the risk for serious complications. Screening may provide an opportunity for lifestyle changes that can prevent or slow down the progression of diabetes.

Lipid Screening: High cholesterol levels usually don't cause any signs or symptoms, so a cholesterol test, or lipid screen (total, LDL, and HDL cholesterol along with triglycerides) is important. Adults age 18-75 years should be tested every 4-6 years with a lipid screen, and more often if it is elevated or there is a family history of lipid disorders. A health professional can help [interpret your numbers](#). Again, [lifestyle changes](#) can improve [high cholesterol](#).

Colorectal Cancer Screening: Colon cancer screening is one of the most important tests to undergo as it has been [proven to decrease the risk](#) of colorectal cancer. Colorectal cancer affects men and women equally. Over 50,000 people die each year from colorectal cancer in the United States and almost all of these deaths would have been prevented if people had been screened. There are [multiple test options](#) available, including colonoscopy. Non-invasive screening tests such as [Cologuard](#)® now exist and may be appropriate for certain patients. Colorectal cancer screening is recommended every 10 years for all adults age 50-75 years, and more often if there is a family or personal history of colon cancer or polyps.

Immunizations: Immunizations are not testing, but they are critical in maintaining health. Similar to screening tests, immunization recommendations periodically change. Login to [Patient Online Services](#) to view your immunizations and check with your health care provider for those recommended for you. Click [here](#) for a full list.

Other screening tests include osteoporosis screening, skin screening for skin cancer, ultrasound test for aortic aneurysm, digital rectal exam (DRE) or PSA test for prostate cancer in men, mammography for breast cancer, Pap testing for cervical cancer in women, and general medical evaluation for certain age groups and health conditions. In addition, HIV, hepatitis C and chlamydia screening (females) is recommended once for all sexually active adults. Talk to your health care provider about these recommendations.