

# Screening Saves Lives!

Getting checked early can help you stop diseases like cancer, diabetes, and osteoporosis in the very beginning, when they're easier to treat. Screening tests can spot illnesses even before you have symptoms. Which screening tests you need depends on your age, family history, your own health history, and other risk factors.

## Breast Cancer

The earlier you find breast cancer, the better your chance of a cure. Small breast-cancers are less likely to spread to lymph nodes and vital organs like the lungs and brain. If you're in your 20s or 30s, your health care provider should perform a breast exam as part of your regular check-up every one to three years. You may need more frequent screenings if you have any extra risk factors, like positive family history. Mammograms can often find a lump before you ever feel it. While you're in your 40s, you should have a mammogram every year. Then between ages 50 and 74, switch to every other year.

## Cervical Cancer

With regular Pap smears, cervical cancer is easy to prevent. The cervix is a narrow passageway between the uterus (where a baby grows) and the vagina (the birth canal). Pap smears find abnormal cells on the cervix, which can be removed before they ever turn into cancer. The main cause of cervical cancer is the human papillomavirus (HPV), a type of STD. You should get your first Pap smear by age 21, and every 3 years after that. If you're 30 or older, you can get co-testing with HPV tests at least every 5 years. If you are sexually active and at risk, you'll need vaginal testing for chlamydia and gonorrhea every year. Two vaccines, Gardasil and Cervarix, can protect women under 26 from several strains of HPV. The vaccines don't protect against all the cancer-causing strains of HPV, however, routine Pap smears are still important and not all cervical cancers start with HPV.

## Osteoporosis

Is a state when a person's bones are weak and fragile. After menopause, women start to lose more bone mass, men get osteoporosis too. The first symptom is often a painful break after even a minor fall, blow, or sudden twist. In Americans age 50 and over, the disease contributes to about half the breaks in women and 1 in 4 among men. Good news, you can prevent and treat osteoporosis. A screening test is recommended for all women age 65 and above. If you have risk factors for osteoporosis, you may need to start sooner.

## High Blood Pressure

As you get older, your risk of high blood pressure increases, especially if you are overweight or have certain bad health habits. High blood pressure can cause life-threatening heart attacks or strokes without any warning. So working with your doctor to control it can save your life. Lowering your blood pressure can also prevent long-term dangers like heart disease and kidney failure. Blood pressure readings include two numbers. Normal adult blood pressure is below 120/80. High blood pressure, also called hypertension, is 140/90 or above.

## Cholesterol Level

High cholesterol can cause plaque to clog your arteries. Plaque can build up for many years without symptoms, eventually causing a heart attack or stroke. High blood pressure, diabetes, and smoking can all cause plaque to build up, too. It's a condition called hardening of the arteries or atherosclerosis. Lifestyle changes and medications can lower your risk. To get your cholesterol

checked, you'll need to fast for 12 hours. Then you'll take a blood test that measures total cholesterol, LDL "bad" cholesterol, HDL "good" cholesterol, and triglycerides (blood fat). If you're 20 or older, you should get this test at least every five years.

## **Type 2 Diabetes**

One-third of Americans with diabetes don't know they have it. Diabetes can cause heart or kidney disease, stroke, blindness from damage to the blood vessels of the retina, and other serious problems. You can control diabetes with diet, exercise, weight loss, and medication, especially when you find it early. Type 2 diabetes is the most common form of the disease. Type 1 diabetes is usually diagnosed in children and young adults. A fasting blood sugar level of 100-125 may show prediabetes; 126 or higher may mean diabetes. Other tests include the A1C test and the oral glucose tolerance test. If you're healthy and have a normal diabetes risk, you should be screened every three years starting at age 45. Talk to your doctor about getting tested earlier if you have a higher risk, like a family history of diabetes.

## **Colorectal cancer**

Is the second most common cause of cancer death after lung cancer! Most colon cancers come from polyps (abnormal masses) that grow on the inner lining of the large intestine. The polyps may or may not be cancerous. If they are, the cancer can spread to other parts of the body. Removing polyps early, before they become cancerous, can prevent it completely. A colonoscopy is a common screening test for colorectal cancer. If doctor finds a polyp, she/he can often remove it right then. Another type of test is a flexible sigmoidoscopy, which looks into the lower part of the colon. If you're at average risk, screening usually starts at age 50.

### **Ask your doctor for screening tests recommended at your age!**

It's good health sense to talk with your doctor about screening tests. Some tests, such as a Pap test or breast exam, should be a routine part of every woman's health care. Other tests might be necessary based on your risk factors. Proper screening won't always prevent a disease, but it can often find a disease early enough to give you the best chance of overcoming it.

## **Be Active, Eat Healthy, Get Regular Medical Check-up's and Appropriate Screening Tests, and Stop Smoking!**

**Everybody is responsible for her/his health and wellbeing!**

[http://www.webmd.com/women/ss/slideshow-screening-tests-women?ecd=wnl\\_spr\\_013017&ctr=wnl-spr-013017\\_nsl-promo-v\\_1&mb=15Y%2fNsV7andqXl8PvIc9OipiMzVEF17PslIlaBzcehc%3d](http://www.webmd.com/women/ss/slideshow-screening-tests-women?ecd=wnl_spr_013017&ctr=wnl-spr-013017_nsl-promo-v_1&mb=15Y%2fNsV7andqXl8PvIc9OipiMzVEF17PslIlaBzcehc%3d)