

# Routine Healthcare for Men

Routine checkups can find treatable problems early. For many medical problems, early treatment can help prevent more serious problems. The value of checkups and how often you have them depends mainly on your age. Your personal and family medical histories are also important. This summary of routine checkups is intended for people who are feeling healthy and not having any symptoms of illness.

If you are having any symptoms that you think may mean a problem, don't wait for your next regular checkup to see your healthcare provider. Get it taken care of right away.

## What needs to be checked and how often?

The tests listed below are recommended for routine healthcare by the US Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) or the American Academy of Family Practice (AAFP). They are the minimum checkup recommendations. Be sure to talk to your healthcare provider about how often you should have a physical exam and how often you need these or other tests.

- **Weight:** At least once a year, preferably each time you visit your provider
- **Blood pressure measurement:** At least yearly for all men
- **Cholesterol test.** At least every 5 years. You will need more frequent testing if you have abnormal results.
- **Blood sugar test for type 2 diabetes:** At least once a year if your blood pressure, blood lipids (cholesterol), or weight is high or you have a family history of type 2 diabetes
- **Colorectal cancer screening:** With 1 of these 3 methods of screening if you are 50 to 75 years old and have an average risk of colon cancer:
  - A fecal occult blood test once a year to check for blood in your stool (bowel movement)
  - A sigmoidoscopy exam every 5 years with fecal occult blood testing at least every 3 years between the 5-year exams
  - A colonoscopy every 10 years

A special X-ray test called a barium enema may be done every 5 years instead of colonoscopy or sigmoidoscopy. While there is no evidence that this test is as effective as the tests listed above, it may be the best choice for some people.

You may need to start colorectal cancer screening earlier if you have a higher risk of colon cancer. Talk to your healthcare provider about this.

- **Prostate cancer tests:** If you are over 40 years old, talk with your healthcare provider about PSA testing. The current recommendation is that you do not need routine screening if you don't have a high risk for prostate cancer and are under age 55 or over age 70.

- **Gonorrhea and syphilis tests:** If you are at high risk for these sexually transmitted infections (STIs)—for example, you have a history of STIs, a new sex partner, or more than 1 sex partner
- **HIV test for the AIDS virus:** Every time your blood is drawn for other routine blood tests if you are 15 to 65 years old and at least every year if you have a high risk for HIV infection. Younger teens and older adults who are at increased risk should also be screened.
- **Tuberculosis (TB) test:** Every year if you have a high risk of TB; for example, because:
  - You are a health worker, drug user, or immigrant.
  - You have diabetes, HIV, or another condition that weakens your immune system.
  - You have close contact with someone infected with TB.
- **Hearing test:** If you are 65 or older
- **Vision test:** If you are 65 or older
- **Skin:** If you have any moles or abnormal areas of skin you would like your provider to check
- **Mouth:** Every year for dental problems and for sores of the gums, especially if you smoke, chew tobacco, wear dentures, or have a medical condition that can be made worse by problems with the teeth or gums, such as diabetes or heart disease

You may need other tests as well. You and your healthcare provider need to talk about what is right for you based on your symptoms and your personal and family medical history.

## What shots do I need?

Get the shots your healthcare provider recommends for you. They may include vaccines against:

- Tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis
- Flu
- HPV (human papillomavirus) through age 26
- Measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR)
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Pneumococcal disease
- Chickenpox
- Shingles

## What other things can I do to stay healthy?

You should expect your healthcare provider to advise you regularly on other ways to stay healthy. Some of these may include:

- **Substance use:** Don't use tobacco or illegal drugs. Avoid using alcohol when you are doing activities like driving, swimming, or boating. Limit your alcohol to no more than 2 drinks a day.
- **Diet and exercise:** Try to keep your weight at a comfortable, healthy level. Limit unhealthy fats and cholesterol in your diet. Choose healthy fats, such as olive oil. Eat whole grains, and at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables each day. Get regular exercise according to your healthcare provider's recommendation.
- **Injury prevention:** Use lap and shoulder belts when you drive. Use a helmet when you ride a motorcycle or bicycle. If you are around guns or other firearms, practice safe handling. Make sure to keep all firearms unloaded and in locked cabinets when they are not in use. Install smoke detectors in your home. Set your hot water heater to less than 120°F (49°C). Prevent falls by removing unsafe rugs and keeping stairs and handrails in good repair. Cover slippery surfaces, such as outside steps, with nonskid surfaces.
- **Dental health:** Visit your dentist regularly. Brush your teeth with fluoride toothpaste daily. Also floss your teeth daily.
- **Sexual behavior:** Prevent sexually transmitted infections by avoiding high-risk sexual behavior. Use latex or polyurethane condoms every time you have sexual contact unless you are in a long-term relationship with just 1 person who is not having sex with anyone else.

Developed by RelayHealth.

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