

PREVENTIVE EXAMS AND SCREENINGS

WHAT IS A PREVENTIVE SERVICE

Getting the best health care means making smart decisions about preventive services. Preventive services, such as screenings, counseling services, preventive medicines, and vaccines are tests or treatments that your doctor provides to prevent illnesses before they cause symptoms or problems. Increased use of preventive services helps improve your health and well-being.

TYPES OF SCREENINGS

High blood pressure, diabetes, and high cholesterol can lead to heart disease and stroke. Combined, these represent the most common causes of death in the U.S. When high blood pressure, pre-diabetes, and high cholesterol are detected early, they can be treated with lifestyle changes. Screenings can be quick and simple. They can even detect cancer at early stages — and save lives.

Type and frequency of preventive services depend on your age, gender, health, and family history. So talk to your doctor about whether the following screening recommendations apply to you:



- **Blood Pressure.** After age 18 adults should have their blood pressure measured every 2 years. If it is above normal (120/80 mm Hg), it should be monitored more frequently.
- **Diabetes.** Adults age 45 and older or any adults with hypertension or a body mass index (BMI) above 25 should have their fasting blood glucose level checked.
- **Cholesterol.** Total cholesterol, low-density lipoprotein (LDL) and high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol, and triglyceride levels should be tested every 5 years after the age of 20. If any values are elevated, more frequent monitoring is appropriate.
- **Colorectal cancer.** At age 50, adults should talk to their doctor about testing for colorectal cancer.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Immunizations are not screenings, but they are an important part of preventive services. Immunization is a proven tool for controlling and eliminating life-threatening infectious diseases and is estimated to help avoid between 2 and 3 million deaths each year. It is one of the most cost-effective health investments, and vaccination does not require any major lifestyle change.

Vaccines are safe. They are carefully tested before they are approved for use. The benefits of vaccination greatly outweigh the risks. Most vaccine reactions are usually minor and temporary, such as a sore arm or mild fever. It is far more likely to become seriously ill by a vaccine-preventable disease than by a vaccine. Check with your health care provider to ensure you're up to date on all recommended immunizations.



Keeping up with your screening and immunization schedule is a key component in preventing chronic disease and maintaining good health throughout your lifetime.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For support from a registered nurse or registered dietitian or to ask questions, please call a Blues On CallSM health coach at **1-888-BLUE-428**.

Log in to the member website listed on the back of your member ID card.

- Click on the **Wellness** tab.
- Click on **Additional Resources** on the left.
- Click on **Health Topics** under **WebMD health information** to search health topics or use the medical encyclopedia to review health issues you want to know more about.