

# TAKING CONTROL

A Newsletter Dedicated to Helping You  
Take a More Active Role in Your Health Care Plan.

## Screening Tests: What You Need and When

Screening tests can find diseases early when they are easier to treat. Health experts from the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force have made recommendations, based on scientific evidence, about testing for the conditions below. Talk to your doctor about which ones apply to you and when and how often you should be tested.

### Screenings For Women

- **Obesity:** Have your body mass index (BMI) calculated to screen for obesity. (BMI is a measure of body fat based on height and weight).
- **High Cholesterol:** Have your cholesterol checked regularly starting at age 45. If you are younger than 45, talk to your doctor about whether to have your cholesterol checked if:
  - you have diabetes
  - you have high blood pressure
  - heart disease runs in your family
  - you smoke
- **Cervical Cancer:** Have a Pap smear every 1 to 3 years if you have ever been sexually active and/or are between the ages of 21 and 65.
- **Breast Cancer:** Have a mammogram every 1 to 2 years starting at age 40.
- **High Blood Pressure:** Have your blood pressure checked at least every 2 years. High blood pressure is 140/90 or higher.
- **Colorectal Cancer:** Have a test for colorectal cancer starting at age 50. Your doctor can help you decide which test is right for you. If you have a family history of colorectal cancer, you may need to be screened earlier.
- **Diabetes:** Have a test for diabetes if you have high blood pressure or high cholesterol.
- **Osteoporosis (Thinning of the bones):** Have a bone density test beginning at age 65 to screen for osteoporosis. If you are between the ages of 60 and 64 and weigh 154 lbs. or less, talk to your doctor about being tested.

### Screenings For Men

- **Obesity:** Have your body mass index (BMI) calculated to screen for obesity. (BMI is a measure of body fat based on height and weight).
- **High Cholesterol:** Have your cholesterol checked regularly starting at age 45. If you are younger than 45, talk to your doctor about whether to have your cholesterol checked if:
  - you have diabetes
  - you have high blood pressure
  - heart disease runs in your family
  - you smoke
- **High Blood Pressure:** Have your blood pressure checked at least every 2 years. High blood pressure is 140/90 or higher.
- **Colorectal Cancer:** Have a test for colorectal cancer starting at age 50. Your doctor can help you decide which test is right for you. If you have a family history of colorectal cancer, you may need to be screened earlier.
- **Diabetes:** Have a test for diabetes if you have high blood pressure or high cholesterol.
- **Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm:** If you are between the ages of 65 and 75 and have ever smoked (100 or more cigarettes during your lifetime), you need to be screened once for abdominal aortic aneurysm, which is an abnormally large or swollen blood vessel in your abdomen.



*NOTE: The information presented in this article was provided by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It is not intended as a substitute for medical advice or treatment. Always seek the advice of your doctor or other medical professional if you have questions about any medical condition, diagnosis or treatment.*