

Preventive Health Screenings for Women

 www.healthywomen.org/content/article/preventive-health-screenings-women

General Health		
What	When	Why
Physical examination	Every 2–3 years; discuss with your health care provider.	To screen for diseases; assess risk for future problems; discuss lifestyle habits; and keep vaccinations up to date.
Thyroid test	Discuss with your health care provider.	To identify an under- or overactive thyroid, both of which are very treatable and either of which can lead to more serious conditions if left untreated.
Bone Health		
What	When	Why
Bone mineral density test	At least once beginning at age 65; earlier depending on your risk factors for osteoporosis.	There are no obvious signs of osteoporosis until you fracture a bone. Bone density screenings identify problems early, enabling you to start treatment and prevent further bone loss.
Breast Health		
What	When	Why
Mammogram	Every 1–2 years starting at age 40.	To identify possible early signs of breast cancer.
Clinical breast exam	About every 3 years for women in their 20s and 30s, and every year for women 40 and over.	Not all breast cancers are found on mammograms; a good clinical breast exam can also help identify cancers relatively early.
Colorectal Health		
What	When	Why

Colonoscopy	Every 10 years starting at age 50. Alternatively, you may get a flexible sigmoidoscopy every 5 years or a double-contrast barium enema every 5 years or a CT colonography (virtual colonoscopy) every 5 years, but a colonoscopy will be needed if any of those results are positive.	To identify (and remove) precancerous polyps or early cancers.
Fecal occult blood test (also called stool guaiac test) or fecal immunochemical test or stool DNA test	Annually starting at age 50 for the fecal occult blood test or the fecal immunochemical test; stool DNA test may be given at intervals recommended by your doctor.	To provide an early warning sign about colon cancer. Not as good as a colonoscopy in identifying cancers or precancerous cells.
Digital rectal exam	Starting at age 50, every 5–10 years with each colon screening.	To help find early signs of colon cancer in the anal canal and lower rectum. Because of its limitations, it is not recommended as the only test for colorectal cancer.
Diabetes		
What	When	Why
Fasting plasma glucose test (also called blood glucose test)	Every three years starting at age 45; more often or earlier if you're overweight or at risk for diabetes.	To provide an early warning sign of high blood sugar levels, which could mean an increased risk for diabetes.
Eye, Ear and Teeth Health		
What	When	Why
Eye exam	At least once from ages 20 to 29; at least two exams between ages 30 and 39. At age 40, get a baseline eye disease screening. Based on results, follow ophthalmologist's recommendations until age 65. After that, complete eye exam every one to two years.	To test your vision and screen for glaucoma and macular degeneration, two common, often age-related conditions.
Hearing test	Beginning at age 18, then once every 10 years until age 50, after which it should be once every three years.	To make sure you're hearing all life has to offer.
Dental exam and cleaning	At least once a year; twice a year is best.	To remove plaque and bacteria that could lead to tooth and gum disease; to check for tongue and mouth cancer. Problems with your teeth can indicate osteoporosis.
Heart Health		

What	When	Why
Blood pressure screening	At least every 2 years in your health care professional's office.	The only way to identify hypertension is with blood pressure screenings.
Cholesterol screening	Every 5 years starting at age 35. Begin screening at age 20 if you smoke, are obese, have diabetes or high blood pressure or have a family history of heart disease.	Treating cholesterol abnormalities can help reduce your risk of heart disease.
Reproductive/Sexual Health		
What	When	Why
Pap test	Every 3-5 years for women ages 21-65. Women 21-30 should get a Pap test every 3 years. Women over 30 should get a combined Pap test and HPV test every 5 years; if HPV testing is not available, they may get a Pap test every 3 years. Screening may be stopped for women over age 65 who have been adequately screened with normal results and are not at high risk for cervical screening. If you have had your cervix and uterus removed, ask your health care provider if you need to continue screening.	Helps identify women at risk for developing cervical cancer.
HPV test	Every 5 years along with Pap test in women ages 30-65 (and in younger women with inconclusive Pap tests).	The HPV test in combination with the Pap test is better at identifying women at risk for developing cervical cancer than the Pap test alone.
Pelvic exam	Annually for women starting at age 21 or younger if indicated by medical history.	As part of a preventive care visit to assess health, lifestyle and health risks.
Chlamydia test	Yearly until age 25 if sexually active; for age 26 and older, get the test if you have new or multiple sexual partners.	Prevents spread of chlamydia.
Sexually transmitted disease (STD) screening	All sexually active women and their partners should be tested for HIV and other STDs before starting sexual activity.	Prevents spread of HIV and other STDs, many of which can only be detected through testing.
Skin Health		
What	When	Why
Skin exam by a doctor	Talk to your health care provider about what's right for you. If you have risk factors for skin cancer, your health care provider may recommend periodic skin exams.	To track worrisome moles and identify skin cancer early.
Skin self-exam	Monthly skin exam starting at age 18.	To know your own skin and be able to report changes to your health care provider.
Immunizations		

What	When	Why
Influenza (flu) vaccine	Annually for everyone 6 months and older.	Protection against some flu viruses (will include H1N1 starting in fall 2010).
Hepatitis A	Given in 2 doses, 6-18 months apart, to children 1 year of age and to adults at risk or who want protection from hepatitis A.	Protects against hepatitis A, a serious liver disease that can cause flu-like illness, jaundice and severe stomach pains and diarrhea.
Hepatitis B	Given to children at birth in 3 doses at 0, 1 and 6 months. Also given to children or adults who weren't vaccinated and are at risk for hepatitis B, such as health care workers.	Protects against hepatitis B, a serious liver disease that can develop into a chronic infection.
Herpes zoster	Once only at age 60 or older.	Shingles prevention.
Human papillomavirus (HPV)	Age 11–12 or 13–26 if not previously vaccinated; 3 doses at 0-, 2- and 6-month intervals; no booster necessary.	Protects against four common types of HPV, including the two most likely to cause cervical cancer.
Pneumonia	Once only at age 65 or older.	Protects against pneumonia.
Tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis (Td/Tdap)	Every 10 years.	Protects against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis.
Meningococcal	College freshmen, military recruits and other at-risk persons; discuss with your health care provider.	Protects against some types of meningococcal disease (meningitis).
Varicella (chickenpox)	Given in 2 doses at 0- and 4- to 8-week intervals to those 19 or older who have not been vaccinated or had chickenpox.	Protects against chickenpox, a usually mild but highly contagious childhood disease, which can be serious in infants and adults.