

# Medical Checkup

Adopting healthy habits such as exercise & balanced nutrition are essential, but we can still develop a health condition due to several reasons such as genetic or environmental factors. Medical preventive health like full body checkups are often ignored. We wait till we fall sick to go to the doctor or we miss essential checkups we should be doing.

With so many packages available at labs & hospitals today, what is best for each of us?

Here, we cover everything you need to know about it:



- Medical checkup plan: what & why?
- Comprehensive: what & why?
- Personalised: what & why?

# What is a medical checkup plan

In a perfect health system, each of us will have our family or physician doctor, who knows you and your health best, and uses their medical knowledge & experience to create a medical checkup plan that is personalised to match your health status. This plan should also match the latest scientific, government, & expert organisations guidelines. The doctor should discuss the benefits & risks of the tests with you so you can together make the best choice for your health.



In many countries, there is clear government guidance on what checkups should be done based on established scientific evidence. Unfortunately, this is missing in India. We have to choose with little guidance the packages offered in the market. Many people get tested too frequently, or at the wrong age, or with tests that aren't very accurate.

# How can I get one?

In our App, Your Medical Checkups, gives recommendations that are personalised to you & comprehensive. These are based on latest international guidelines adapted to the Indian context by our doctors. For now, you can choose your preferred lab or hospital to get the checkups at, but make sure all the checkups are included.

The most common problems when you pick a package without checking if it is best for you are:

## At pathology labs:

Though affordable and easy to get done at home, as they often offer only blood tests, they can lead to undertesting by missing tests like pap smears, scans, or an in-person doctor's checkup. A “full body checkup” needs to have different types of checkups and not just blood tests.

## At hospitals & clinics:

Though very comprehensive, they could lead to overtesting or non-personalised testing, and we may avoid them as they cost more.

## Frequency of each test:

will vary for each person. Not all checkups & tests are annual. Some need to be done only every few years while others every few months. A complete hospital package might not be needed for everyone each year, e.g., a mammography. But, that should not mean that the few essential tests are skipped, e.g., clinical breast examination.



# Why is it important

Health conditions can develop at any age and become severe with time. Medical or full body checkups are for healthy people as well as those with existing conditions. It is recommended for individuals across all ages, but especially for those above the age of 40.

It enables you to stay on top of your preventive health by:

- detecting health conditions before they show symptoms
- allowing us to take action before condition becomes severe
- reducing complications & future medical treatment
- maintaining good health

We know this can improve our lives and could spare the physical, emotional, and financial pain of dealing with a serious illness—and maybe even save our life



# What is Comprehensive & Personalised?

## Comprehensive

A full body checkup is a comprehensive combination of tests & checkups that ensures the proper functioning of all your body systems. It is not just about tons of blood tests, rather, it should consists of:

- Lab tests like blood, urine, stool tests
- Diagnostic tests like scans, pap smears
- Doctor checks like dentist, gynecologist
- Vaccines like COVID- 19, Influenza
- Risk assessments to measure risk of developing health conditions like diabetes, breast cancer, etc.

## Personalised

The best way to create a medical checkup plan is to personalise it. The two biggest factors that define the checks you need are - gender & age. For example, if you're a female then getting screened for breast cancer is a must. But if you're a male, you will have a screening for prostate cancer on your list of recommended checks. With increasing age, the frequency of certain checks such as those for osteoporosis will increase.

But you may be at a higher risk of developing a health condition, depending on other personal factors called risk factors. Common ones include:

- Body mass index (BMI)
- Amount of exercise
- Diet, tobacco, alcohol intake
- Family history of diseases
- Personal history of diseases
- Personal history of medications and allergies

# Why is it important to personalise?

Not getting tested at all and overtesting, both are detrimental to your health.

Doing screening tests that are not recommended for your personal situation is known as **overtesting**.

E.g., doing chest x-rays annually when you are not at high risk of any condition it can detect. This could incorrectly indicate the presence of a disease, lead to unnecessary and invasive tests and surgery and needlessly waste your time and money. It could also lead to unnecessary exposure to radiation.

So, it is important to get the checks that **maximise your benefit and minimise risks**. This can be done by following plans that personalise based on individual status and take latest scientific guidelines into account as they have studied for risk of overtesting.



## The need for personalisation: Example of PSA blood test



Prostate-specific antigen (PSA) is a blood test that has started becoming common in India to screen for prostate cancer amongst men. However, PSA is not a cancer-specific marker. A higher than normal PSA can indicate prostate cancer, but most **often it signifies a noncancerous condition** such as a prostate infection or an enlarged prostate.

In the U.S.A, a 2018 analysis by the government prevention agency found that 60% of men who had an elevated PSA value and then got a follow-up biopsy did not have cancer. **This led the medical institutions there to issue guidelines that the PSA blood test should only be done by individuals at high risk of prostate cancer and not all men.**