

# PREVENTING COMPLICATIONS WITH HEALTH SCREENINGS

Factsheet | HGIC 4398 | **Published:** Feb 29, 2024

Health screenings are the best way to identify diseases in the earliest stages before the onset of signs and symptoms. Even when you are feeling well, it is important to schedule regular checkups with your healthcare provider. These routine visits play a crucial role in preventing potential issues in the future. Individuals who maintain regular appointments with their healthcare provider and undergo routine screenings increase their chances of receiving an early diagnosis in the event of a medical condition. This, in turn, contributes to improved outcomes and a longer lifespan.



Regular screenings also provide an opportunity for physicians to track and compare test results over time, enhancing the likelihood of preventing potential issues through interventions such as medications or lifestyle adjustments. The type of routine screenings you may need changes as you age and will depend on your personal and family medical history and risk factors for certain diseases.

There are specific times when you should see your provider or receive specific health screenings. The US Preventive Services Task Force publishes a list of recommended screenings. These are the screening guidelines for women and men by age.

## Guidelines For Women

Screening Type	Name of Screening	Ages 18-39	Ages 40-64	Ages 65 and older
Bone Health	Bone density test (DEXA scan)	Discuss with provider	Age 50 to 64 if you have risk factors for osteoporosis	At least once at some point during this age range
Breast Cancer	Mammogram	Not recommended	Every 1-2 years	Every 1-2 years up to age 75
Cervical Cancer	Pap test	Start at age 21 and continue every 3 years	Every 3 years	Discuss with provider

	HPV test	After age 30, test every 5 years	Every 5 years	Discuss with provider
Colorectal Health	Stool-based fecal occult blood (gFOBT) or fecal immunochemical test (FIT)	Discuss with provider	Every year	Continue regularly until age 75, then discuss with provider
	Stool sDNA-FIT test	Discuss with provider	Every 1-3 years	Continue regularly until age 75, then discuss with provider
	Sigmoidoscopy	Discuss with provider	Every 5 years or every 10 years with stool testing with FIT every year	Continue regularly until age 75, then discuss with provider
	Colonoscopy	Discuss with provider	Every 10 years	Continue regularly until age 75, then discuss with provider
Diabetes	Blood glucose test	Start at age 35 and repeat every 3 years if you have no risk factors for diabetes	Every 3 years, if you have no risk factors for diabetes	Every 3 years
Ear Health	Hearing test	Start at age 18, then every 10 years	Every 10 years ages 40 to 49, then every 3 years after age 50	Every 3 years
Eye Health	Eye exam	Every 5-10 years before age 40. If you have vision problems, increase to every 2 years	Every 2-4 years ages 40 to 54, and every 1-3 years ages 55 to 64	Every 1-2 years
Heart Health	Blood pressure test	At least once every 3-5 years	Once a year	Once a year
	Cholesterol test	Start at age 20 if you have known risk factors for coronary heart disease and repeat every 5 years	Start at age 45 with no known risk factors and repeat every 5 years	Every 5 years
Lung Health	Low-dose computed tomography (LDCT)	Discuss with provider	Annually, if all are present: – Above age 50	Annually, if both are present:

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Have a 20 pack/year smoking history</li> <li>– Currently smoke or have quit within the past 15 years</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Have a 20 pack/year smoking history</li> <li>– Currently smoke or have quit within the past 15 years</li> </ul>
Oral Health	Dental exam	Once or twice every year for an exam and cleaning	Once or twice every year for an exam and cleaning	Once or twice every year for an exam and cleaning

### Guidelines For Men

Screening Type	Name of Screening	Ages 18-39	Ages 40-64	Ages 65 and older
Bone Health	Bone density test (DEXA scan)	Discuss with provider	Age 50 to 64 if you have risk factors for osteoporosis	At least once at some point during this age range
Colorectal Health	Stool-based fecal occult blood (gFOBT) or fecal immunochemical test (FIT)	Discuss with provider	Every year	Continue regularly until age 75, then discuss with provider
	Stool sDNA-FIT test	Discuss with provider	Every 1-3 years	Continue regularly until age 75, then talk to provider
	Sigmoidoscopy	Discuss with provider	Every 5 years or every 10 years with stool testing with FIT every year	Continue regularly until age 75, then discuss with provider
	Colonoscopy	Discuss with provider	Every 10 years	Continue regularly until age 75, then discuss with provider
Diabetes	Blood glucose test	Start at age 35 and repeat every 3 years if you have no risk factors for diabetes	Every 3 years if you have no risk factors for diabetes	Every 3 years

Ear Health	Hearing test	Start at age 18, then every 10 years	Every 10 years ages 40 to 49, then every 3 years after age 50	Every 3 years
Eye Health	Eye exam	Every 5-10 years before age 40. If you have vision problems, increase to every 2 years	Every 2-4 years ages 40 to 54, and every 1-3 years ages 55 to 64	Every 1-2 years
Heart Health	Blood pressure test	At least once every 3-5 years	Once a year	Once a year
	Cholesterol test	Start at age 35 if you have no known risk factors for coronary heart disease; age 20 with known risk factors	Every 5 years	Every 5 years
	Ultrasound for abdominal aortic aneurysm	Not recommended	Discuss with provider	Discuss with provider if you have smoked
Lung Health	Low-dose computed tomography (LDCT)	Discuss with provider	Annually, if all are present: – Above age 50 – Have a 20 pack/year smoking history – Currently smoke or have quit within the past 15 years	Annually, if both are present: – Have a 20 pack/year smoking history – Currently smoke or have quit within the past 15 years
Oral Health	Dental exam	Once or twice every year for an exam and cleaning	Once or twice every year for an exam and cleaning	Once or twice every year for an exam and cleaning
Prostate Cancer	Rectal exam	Discuss with provider	Every 5-10 years, with each colorectal screening	Every 5-10 years, with each colorectal screening until age 70
	Prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood test	Discuss with provider	Discuss with provider	Discuss with provider

## The Importance of Health Screenings

Getting recommended screenings is one of the most important things you can do for your health. When you skip or postpone health screenings, you could delay detecting disease. Prevention is the best way to avoid costly treatments in the future, to reduce stress, to save time, and to promote healthy behaviors. It is important to talk with your doctor and ask questions so that you understand your health/diagnosis. Ensure that you are comfortable discussing the doctor's medical plan for managing your diagnosis. For further resources or local educational programs, refer to other fact sheets on the Home & Garden Information Center website.

### Sources:

1. *Health screenings for women ages 18 to 39: MedlinePlus Medical Encyclopedia.* (n.d.). <https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007462.htm>
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3. *Health screenings for women age 65 and older: MedlinePlus Medical Encyclopedia.* (n.d.). <https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007463.htm>
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8. Pierce, J., DO. (2023, August 16). *Why is health screening important?* Preventative Diagnostic Center. <https://www.pdcenterlv.com/blog/why-is-health-screening-important/>

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