

Screening Tests: What You Need and When

Health experts from the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force have made these recommendations, based on scientific evidence, about which screening tests you need and when to get them.

- **Breast Cancer.** Have a mammogram every 1 to 2 years.
- **Cervical Cancer.** Have a Pap smear every 1 to 3 years if you have ever been sexually active. If you are older than 65 and recent Pap smears before you turned 65 were normal, you do not need a Pap smear.
- **Colorectal Cancer.** Have a test for colorectal cancer. Your doctor can help you decide which test is right for you.
- **Depression.** Your emotional health is as important as your physical health. If you have felt "down," sad, or hopeless over the last 2 weeks or have felt little interest or pleasure in doing things, you may be depressed. Talk to your doctor about being screened for depression.
- **Diabetes.** Have a blood test for diabetes if you have high blood pressure.
- **High Blood Pressure.** Have your blood pressure checked at least every 2 years. High blood pressure is 140/90 or higher.
- **High Cholesterol.** Have your cholesterol checked regularly.
- **HIV.** Talk with your doctor about HIV screening if any of these apply:
 - You have had unprotected sex with multiple partners.
 - You have used or now use injection drugs.
 - You exchange sex for money or drugs or have sex partners who do.
 - You have past or present sex partners who are HIV-infected, are bisexual, or use injection drugs.
 - You are being treated for sexually transmitted diseases.
 - You had a blood transfusion between 1978 and 1985
- **Obesity.** Have your body mass index (BMI) calculated to screen for obesity. (BMI is a measure of body fat based on height and weight.) You can find your own BMI with the BMI calculator from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute at: <http://www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi/>.
- **Osteoporosis (Bone Thinning).** Have a bone density test at age 65 to screen for osteoporosis. If you are younger than 65, talk to your doctor about whether you should be tested. You may need to have this test again after 2 or more years.
- **Sexually Transmitted Infections.** Talk to your doctor about being tested for sexually transmitted infections.

A Note on Other Conditions. Every body is different. Always feel free to ask your doctor or nurse about being checked for any condition, not just the ones above. If you are worried about diseases such as glaucoma or skin cancer, for example, ask your doctor about them. And always tell your doctor about any changes in your health, including your vision and hearing.

Screening Test Record

Take this form to your doctor's office. You can use it to keep track of the date and results of your last screening tests, when you should have the test next, and questions you have for your next doctor visit.

Test For	Last Test(mo/yr)	Results	Next Test Due(mo/yr)	Questions for the Doctor
Breast Cancer (Mammogram)				
Cervical Cancer (Pap Smear)				
Colorectal Cancer				
Diabetes				
High Blood Pressure				
High Cholesterol Total				
HDL (Good)				
LDL (Bad)				
HIV Infection				
Obesity (BMI)				
Osteoporosis(Bone Density Test)				
Sexually Transmitted Infections				

Sources. The information in this fact sheet is based on research findings from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF). The USPSTF, supported by AHRQ, is the leading independent panel of experts in prevention and primary care. This fact sheet was developed in partnership with AARP.