**Preventive Care: Put Yourself First**

If you have children, chances are you take them to their pediatrician regularly for vaccinations, checkups and more. The care your child receives from their pediatrician is important in their health and wellbeing. When is the last time you had a check up?

All adults should see their physician annually, even when they are healthy. Although an annual well woman exam is important, it is not a substitution for a preventive care exam. The purpose of preventive care visits is to screen for chronic health conditions, assess future risk, update vaccinations, and encourage healthy lifestyle habits. It is much easier to prevent, manage, and treat a disease in the early stages. Most insurance plans cover preventive care at a 100%.

Some of the tests and screenings that may be done at your preventive care visit include:

- blood pressure check
- blood glucose test
- cholesterol test
- colon cancer screening
- depression screening
- genetic testing for breast and ovarian cancer in high risk groups
- HIV testing and other sexually transmitted infections testing
- mammogram
- osteoporosis screening
- pap smear
- prostate cancer screening

Before scheduling your appointment, check with your health insurance carrier to see what benefits you have available. Come prepared to your appointment with a list of questions you have for your healthcare provider, and be sure you write down any medications or supplements you take regularly. Even over-the-counter supplements can have drug interactions and side effects, so be sure you make a note of these as well. If you have a history of high blood pressure, bring a log of what your readings have been at various times during the day. If you have diabetes or prediabetes, bring a log of your glucose readings at various times throughout the day. These logs provide your physician with much better insight regarding your health status. Don't be afraid to ask questions no matter how trivial they may seem. Remember, you are the best advocate for your health.

**Source:** National Institutes of Health

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**Talk with Your Doctor**

It can be difficult to know what to ask when you don’t know much about what your doctor is looking for during your check-up, and what information they get from screenings. Other times, you don’t know what to expect, especially if you have never had one of the tests. Use the following questions as a guide to help you talk about prevention with your doctor, and understand what they will do during your check-up.

- What is the test and how does it tell whether or not I have a problem?
- What are the pros and cons for having the test?
- Does it give general or specific information?
- What happens next?
- Will more tests be necessary?
- How accurate and reliable is the test?
- Will the test be uncomfortable?
- How do I prepare for the test?
- Where do I go for the test?
- How and when will I get the results?

**Source:** Matria Healthcare: Winning Habits

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**Did You Know**

About 90% of middle-aged Americans will develop high blood pressure in their lifetime, and nearly 70% of those who have high blood pressure now do not have it under control.
Immunizations Save Lives

Thousands of adults in the United States die each year from diseases that they could have been vaccinated against. Many adults remain unvaccinated because they are either unaware or misinformed about the need for vaccines beyond childhood. Vaccines are recommended for all adults based on factors such as age, travel, occupation, medical history, and vaccines they have had in the past. Additionally, everyone 6 months of age and older should get a seasonal flu shot each year.

The following vaccine-preventable diseases, not long ago, disabled and killed millions of American children. Thanks to our country’s high childhood immunization coverage levels, these diseases are now very uncommon. Here is a list of vaccine-preventable child diseases:

- Diphtheria
- Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)
- Hepatitis A & B
- Influenza
- Measles
- Meningococcal
- Mumps
- Pertussis (whooping cough)
- Pneumococcal disease
- Polio
- Rotavirus (severe diarrhea)
- Rubella (German measles)
- Tetanus (lockjaw)
- Varicella (chickenpox)

In addition, vaccines recommended for seniors, age 65 and older, can prevent:

- Influenza (Flu)
- Shingles (Herpes Zoster)
- Diphtheria/Tetanus
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough)
- Pneumococcal (Pneumonia)

ARE VACCINES SAFE?

The United States currently has the safest, most effective vaccine supply in history. Years of testing are required by law before a vaccine can be licensed. Once in use, vaccines are continually monitored for safety and efficacy. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) continually work to ensure vaccine safety.

Talk to your healthcare provider about which vaccines are right for you. Accurate information about the value of vaccines as well as their possible side-effects helps people to make informed decisions about vaccination.

Sources: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Vaccines.gov

Safety Corner Crime Awareness

Did you know most burglars enter homes through doors or windows that are left unlocked or open. According to the US Property Crime statistics, property crimes including larceny, burglary, and motor vehicle thefts continue to rise. Here are a few tips to help you feel safer in your home:

- Make your home look occupied, and make it difficult to break into.
- Lock all outside doors and windows before you leave the house or go to bed.
- Leave lights on when you go out. If you are going to be away for a length of time, connect some lamps to automatic timers that turn on in the evening and off during the day.
- Keep your garage door closed and locked.

- Don’t allow daily deliveries of mail, newspapers or flyers to build up while you are away. Arrange with the Post Office to hold your mail, or arrange for a friend or neighbor to take them regularly.
- Arrange for your lawn to be mowed if you are going away for an extended time.
- Check your locks on doors and windows and replace them with secure devices as necessary.
- Pushbutton locks on doorknobs are easy for burglars to open. Install deadbolt locks on all your outside doors.
- Sliding glass doors are vulnerable. Special locks are available for better security.

There are three L’s of crime prevention: light up your residence, lock your doors at all times, and call the law when you see something suspicious. Let the professionals handle any situation concerning your home. Your job is to communicate with the police, and let them take over if there is an issue. Your job is to stay safe!

Source: www.taa.org
Taking care of yourself is the best way to live a happy, healthy life. In addition to being **physically active, tobacco-free, and eating a healthy diet**, you should also practice regular preventive care.

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Consult your healthcare provider to determine which care you should seek and when.

Source: AHRQ, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality