

Healthy NOW

Reach ideal heart health

Diseases of the heart and blood vessels (cardiovascular disease) can cause heart attacks, chest pain, and strokes. For years it was thought that only men had to worry about cardiovascular disease. But cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death among women in the United States.

Taking care of your body and your health can lower your risk and may even help you live longer. If you don't already have cardiovascular disease, follow these guidelines for good heart health:

- Low total cholesterol.
- Blood pressure below 120/80 mmHg.
- Fasting blood glucose levels below 100 mg/dL.
- A body mass index below 25.
- No smoking.
- Routine exercise. Try for 150 minutes of moderate exercise each week, or 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week.

Should women take aspirin?

You may have heard that taking an aspirin every day is good for the heart. If you already have coronary heart disease or diabetes, you have a higher risk for cardiovascular disease and should consider aspirin therapy. Always talk with your primary care provider (PCP) first.

But for most women who have a low risk for cardiovascular disease, taking an aspirin each day can do more harm than good. It raises the risk for gastrointestinal bleeding and certain kinds of stroke.

Spread the word Mammograms save lives

A breast X-ray (mammogram) is a tool for finding breast cancer early, when it's easiest to treat. Women ages 45 to 54 should have a mammogram each year. **Women ages 55 and older should have 1 every 2 years.**

Ladies, talk with your PCP about your personal risk factors. Follow his or her advice about when to start getting mammograms and how often you should get them.

Remind other women you know and love about the importance of mammograms – it just might save their lives!

Let's beat breast cancer!



Women's health screenings by t

Screening tests can find diseases early, when they're easiest to treat. Talk to your PCP about which preventive medical tests you need to stay healthy.

VISION DISORDERS – Starting at age 60 (age 40 if you are African American), have a full eye exam with dilated pupils at least every 2 years. This will check for glaucoma and other eye problems. If you have diabetes, you should have an eye exam each year no matter what age you are.

HEART DISEASE – If you are age 45 to 79, ask your PCP if you should take aspirin every day to help lower your risk of a heart attack.

BLOOD PRESSURE – Have your blood pressure checked every 2 years. Having high blood pressure increases your chance of getting heart or kidney disease and having a stroke. If you have high blood pressure, you may need medicine to control it.

COLORECTAL CANCER – If you are age 50 to 75, get tested for colorectal cancer. You and your PCP can decide which test is best. If you have a family history of colorectal cancer, you may need to be tested before you turn 50.

OTHER CANCERS – Ask your PCP if you should be tested for lung, oral, skin, or other cancers.

PAP TEST – If you are age 21 to 65, get a Pap test 1 time every 3 years. Women ages 30 to 65 years old who have had normal Pap and human papillomavirus (HPV) test results in the past can choose to instead have a Pap test 1 time every 5 years, along with an HPV test. Women older than 65 who have had normal screenings, and do not have a high risk for cervical cancer, do not need Pap tests. Talk with your PCP about how often you should be tested. You still need a well woman visit yearly even if you do not need a Pap test.

DEPRESSION – If you have felt down or hopeless during the past 2 weeks or you have little interest in things you usually enjoy, talk to your doctor. Depression is treatable.

MAMMOGRAM – If you are age 45 to 54, get a screening every year. If you are 55 or older, you should get a screening every 1 to 2 years. Talk with your PCP about your personal risk factors. Together you can decide when you should start getting mammograms and how often.

What is chlamydia?

Chlamydia is a common sexually transmitted disease (STD) that can infect both men and women. Anyone who has unprotected anal, vaginal, or oral sex can get chlamydia. If not treated, chlamydia can make it difficult or impossible for a woman to get pregnant. It can also cause a type of pregnancy that occurs outside the womb and can be fatal.

Chlamydia is easy to cure with the right treatment. It is important that you take all of the medicine your PCP prescribes to cure your infection.

Talk with your health care provider. Ask if you should be tested for chlamydia or other STDs. If you are a sexually active woman younger than age 25, you should be tested. If you are pregnant, you should be tested at your first prenatal visit. Testing and treatment are the best ways to prevent health problems.

Could mindfulness help you control anxiety?

Mindfulness means learning to stay in the present moment. Your thoughts may still race, but with practice, you can learn to accept worries. Mindfulness may help the symptoms of anxiety disorder. Other treatments include counseling and medicine.

Try these exercises to boost mindfulness:

- Inhale, then exhale, focusing on your breath.
- Slowly think about your entire body, from your toes to your head. Notice the sensations in each area without trying to change them.
- While walking, focus on the movements of each step. Describe them to yourself: "Lifting foot. Stepping forward. Heel touching ground. Toe touching ground."

DIABETES – If you are age 45 or older and are overweight, pregnant or at high risk, ask your PCP to test you for diabetes. Diabetes, or high blood sugar, can cause problems with your heart, eyes, feet, kidneys, nerves, and other body parts.

CHOLESTEROL – Once you turn 20, have your cholesterol checked every 4 to 6 years. Have it checked more often if you have diabetes, a history of heart disease, high blood pressure, a BMI of 30 or higher, or you smoke. High cholesterol is 1 of the major risk factors for heart disease.

BODY MASS INDEX (BMI) – BMI is a measure of your body fat based on your height and weight. It is used to screen for obesity.

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES – Talk to your PCP to see if you should be tested for HIV, gonorrhea, syphilis, chlamydia, or other STDs.

WELL-WOMAN EXAM – An annual exam is a once-a-year visit to your PCP OR gynecologist for a general health check, including a breast exam and Pap test, if needed. It is an important part of preventive care and a first step in wellness. A well-woman exam is 1 of the most important steps that women of all ages take to protect and take charge of their health.

Cervical cancer: Screening

Because early cervical cancer causes no symptoms, regular screenings can be a lifesaver. Ask your PCP how often you should have these screening tests done.

Pap test. Regular Pap tests can show changes in the cells of the cervix before they become cancer. They can also find cervical cancer in its early stages, before it has spread, when it can be treated most easily. Pap tests are recommended for all women ages 21 to 65 years old. If your tests have been normal, you may only need this test every 3 years.

It's important not to panic if your PCP says that your Pap test results are abnormal. This simply means that there are cells in your cervix that do not appear to be normal, healthy cells. Just how abnormal they are varies. Ask your health care provider to explain the results of the test to you and discuss next steps.

HPV test. This test is used to find an HPV infection in the cells of the cervix. The HPV test may be done along with the Pap test for cervical cancer screening in certain age groups. You may only need this test every 5 years.

Pelvic exam. This exam is often done along with Pap and HPV tests. This can also help find some cancers of the uterus and other parts of the female reproductive system.

Prevent cervical cancer

with the right test at the right time



- Screening tests can find abnormal cells on the cervix that could turn into cancer if left untreated.
- The HPV test looks for the virus that causes these cell changes.

The only cancer the Pap test screens for is cervical.



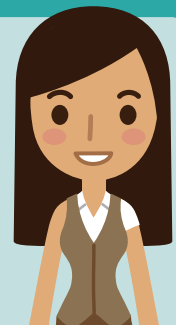
HPV is the main cause of cervical cancer.

- HPV is a very common virus, passed from 1 person to another during sex.
- Most people get it, but it usually goes away on its own.
- If HPV doesn't go away, it can cause cancer.

Most women don't need a Pap test every year!

Have your first Pap test when you're **21**

If your test results are normal, you can wait 3 years before your next Pap test. Talk with your PCP about how often you should be tested.



HPV tests aren't recommended for screening **women under 30.**

When you turn 30, you have a choice:

If your test results are normal, get a Pap test every 3 years.
Or get both a Pap test and an HPV test every 5 years.

You can stop getting screened if:

- You're **older than 65** and have had normal Pap test results for many years.



- Your cervix was removed during surgery for a non-cancerous condition like fibroids. (The cervix is the lower, narrow end of the womb that connects the womb to the vagina (birth canal)).

It is still important to have a well woman visit every year, even if you are not due for a Pap test.