



# The guy's guide to preventive care

## A helpful checklist



Getting certain preventive care tests and screenings and practicing healthy habits can help keep you at your healthy best. When you go for your next checkup, use this chart as a checklist to talk to your doctor about which tests you should get, when you should have them and how often.

Type of test	When to get it and why <sup>1</sup>
<b>Blood pressure reading</b>	If you are age 18 to 40 and you aren't at higher risk for high blood pressure, it's recommended to get your blood pressure checked every 3 to 5 years. If you are age 40 or older, or if you are at higher risk for high blood pressure, get your blood pressure checked once a year.
<b>Colon cancer screening</b> (There are various types to be determined by your history and doctor)	If you are age 50 to 75, get tested regularly for colorectal cancer. You may need to get tested before age 50 if colorectal cancer runs in your family. There are different ways to test for colorectal cancer. Your doctor can help you decide which test you would prefer.
<b>Testing for Type 2 diabetes</b>	If you are overweight or have other risk factors for Type 2 diabetes, like a family history of diabetes, ask your doctor to test you for diabetes.
<b>Depression test</b>	All adults older than 18 years should be routinely screened for depression. Screening for depression refers to medical professionals asking about symptoms of depression, even if their patients do not mention them. Depression symptoms include feeling sad, hopeless, tired, distracted, or not interested in activities that would normally interest you.
<b>Hepatitis C blood test</b>	It's important for certain people to get tested for the hepatitis C virus. Everyone born between 1945 and 1965 need to be screened for the hepatitis C virus. If you have risk factors for hepatitis C – like any injection drug use or if you had a blood transfusion before 1992– check with your doctor if you need to get tested.
<b>HIV testing</b>	Get tested for HIV at least once. You may need to get tested more often depending on your risk.
<b>Chlamydia and gonorrhea testing</b>	Talk with a doctor about getting tested if you are worried about chlamydia, gonorrhea, or other sexually transmitted disease.
<b>Prostate cancer screening</b>	The decision about whether to be screened for prostate cancer should be an individual one. Men ages 55 to 69 years should talk to their doctor about the potential benefits and harms of prostate-specific antigen (PSA)-based screening for prostate cancer.



<sup>1</sup> Healthfinder website (accessed December 2017) [healthfinder.gov/myhealthfinder](http://healthfinder.gov/myhealthfinder)  
<sup>2</sup> Medicine.net website: *Statins* (accessed December 2017) [medicinenet.com/statins/article.htm](http://medicinenet.com/statins/article.htm).  
<sup>3</sup> WebMD website: *Should You Take Aspirin For Heart Disease?* (accessed December 2017): [webmd.com](http://webmd.com).  
<sup>4</sup> Family Doctor website: *What You Can Do to Maintain Your Health* (accessed December 2017): [familydoctor.org](http://familydoctor.org).

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## Stay up-to-date with your shots

- Get a flu vaccine every year. The seasonal flu vaccine is the best way to protect yourself and others from the flu.
- Get the Tdap shot to protect against tetanus, diphtheria, and whooping cough (pertussis). Everyone needs to get the Tdap shot once.
- After you get a Tdap shot, get a Td shot every 10 years to keep you protected against tetanus and diphtheria.

If you are age 60 or older, get shots for older adults. Older adults need shots to protect against diseases like pneumonia and shingles.

## Ask your doctor about medicines to prevent heart attacks and strokes<sup>2</sup>

Statins are medicines that reduce the risk of heart attack and stroke by helping to lower or prevent high cholesterol. Statins are usually recommended for individuals' age 40 to 75 with high cholesterol, diabetes, high blood pressure, or who smoke when their doctor has decided they are at high risk for heart attack and stroke.

Statins aren't right for everyone, and all medicines have pros and cons. When you talk with your doctor about taking a statin, it's important to discuss your personal history as well as your risk for heart attack and stroke.

**What about aspirin?**<sup>3</sup> Talk with your doctor about taking aspirin to prevent disease. Taking low-dose aspirin (or “baby aspirin”) regularly can lower your risk for heart attack, stroke, and colorectal cancer. For most people, aspirin is safe. But it's not right for everyone.

Ask your doctor about taking aspirin regularly if you are age 50 to 59 and you have any of these risk factors for heart disease: smoking, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or diabetes.

## Other healthy habits to keep<sup>4</sup>

- **Get help to quit.** If you smoke, ask your doctor about services to help you quit.
- **Eat a healthy diet.** If your doctor has told you that you are at risk for heart disease or diabetes, ask about dietary counseling. Focus on eating a healthy diet, including at least five servings of fruits and vegetables daily.
- **Watch your weight.** If you are overweight, ask your doctor about screening and counseling for obesity.
- **Drink alcohol in moderation.** If you choose to drink, have only a moderate (limited) amount. This means: no more than 2 drinks a day for men.



Always talk to your doctor to find out what tests or screenings are right for you.