Preventative Care for Adults, Male

MAINTAIN REGULAR HEALTH EXAMS

- A routine yearly physical is a good way to check in with your primary care provider about your health and preventive screening. It is also an opportunity to share updates about your health and any concerns you have and receive a thorough all-over exam.
- If you smoke or chew tobacco, find out from your caregiver how to quit. It can literally save your life, no matter how long you have been a tobacco user. If you do not use tobacco, never begin.
- Maintain a healthy diet and normal weight. Increased weight leads to problems with blood pressure and diabetes. Decrease saturated fat in the diet and increase regular exercise. Get information about proper diet from your caregiver if necessary. Eat a variety of foods, including fruit, vegetables, animal or vegetable protein, such as meat, fish, chicken, and eggs, or beans, lentils, tofu, and grains, such as rice.
- High blood pressure causes heart and blood vessel problems. Fat leaves deposits in your arteries that can block them. This causes heart disease and vessel disease elsewhere in your body. Check your blood pressure regularly and keep it within normal limits. Men over age 50 or those who have a family history of high blood pressure should have it checked at least every year.
- Aerobic exercise helps maintain good heart health. 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise is recommended. For example, a brisk walk that increases your heart rate and breathing. This walk should be done on most days of the week. Persistent high blood pressure should be treated with medicine if weight loss and exercise do not work.
- For many men aged 20 and older, having a cholesterol test of the blood every 5 years is recommended. If your cholesterol is found to be borderline high, or if you have heart disease or certain other medical conditions, then you may need to have it monitored more frequently.
- Avoid smoking, drinking alcohol in excess (more than two drinks per day) or use of street drugs. Do not share needles with anyone. Ask for professional help if you need assistance or instructions on stopping the use of alcohol, cigarettes, and/or drugs.
- Maintain normal blood lipids and cholesterol by minimizing your intake of saturated fat. Eat a well rounded diet otherwise, with plenty of fruit and vegetables. The National Institutes of Health encourage men to eat 5-9 servings of fruit and vegetables each day. Your caregiver can help you keep your risk of heart disease or stroke at a lower level.
- Ask your caregiver if you are in need of earlier testing because of: a strong family history of heart disease, or you have signs of elevated testosterone (male sex hormone) levels. This can predispose you to earlier heart disease. Ask if you should have a stress test if your history suggests this. A stress test is a test done on a treadmill that looks for heart disease. This test can find disease prior to there being a problem.
- Diabetes screening assesses your blood sugar level after a fasting once every 3 years after age 45 if previous tests were normal.
- Most routine colon cancer screening begins at the age of 50. On a yearly basis, doctors may provide special easy to use take-home tests to check for hidden blood in the stool. Sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy can detect the earliest forms of colon cancer and is life saving. These test use a small camera at the end of a tube to directly examine the colon. Speak to your caregiver about this at age 50, when routine screening begins (and is repeated every 5 years unless early forms of pre-cancerous polyps or small growths are found).
- At the age of 50 men usually start screening for prostate cancer every year. Screening may begin at a younger age for those with higher risk. Those at higher risk include African-Americans or having a family history of prostate cancer. There are two types of tests for prostate cancer:
  - Prostate-specific antigen (PSA) testing. Recent studies raise questions about prostate cancer using PSA and you should discuss this with your caregiver.
  - Digital rectal exam (in which your doctor's lubricated and gloved finger feels for enlargement of the prostate through the anus).
- Practice safe sex. Use condoms. Condoms are used for birth control and to help reduce the spread of sexually transmitted infections (or STIs). Unsafe sex is having an unprotected physical relationship with

someone who is bisexual, homosexual, uses intravenous street drugs, or going with someone who has sexual relations with high-risk groups. Practicing safe sex helps you avoid getting an STI. Some of the STIs are gonorrhea (the clap), chlamydia, syphilis, trichimonas, herpes, HPV (human papiloma virus) and HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) which causes AIDS. The herpes, HIV and HPV are viral illnesses that have no cure. These can result in disability, cancer and death.

- It is not safe for someone who has AIDS or is HIV positive to have unprotected sex with someone else who is positive. The reason for this is the fact that there are many different strains of HIV. If you have a strain that is readily treated with medications and then suddenly introduce a strain from a partner that has no further treatment options, you may suddenly have a strain of HIV that is untreatable. Even if you are both positive for HIV, it is still necessary to practice safe sex.
- Use sunscreen with a SPF (or skin protection factor) of 15 or greater. Apply sunscreen liberally and repeatedly throughout the day. Being outside in the sun when your shadow caused by the sun is shorter than you are, means you are being exposed to sun at greater intensity. Lighter skinned people are at a greater risk of skin cancer. Don't forget to also wear sunglasses in order to protect your eyes from too much damaging sunlight. Damaging sunlight can accelerate cataract formation.
- Once a month do a whole body skin exam or review, using a mirror to look at your back. Notify your caregivers of changes in moles, especially if there are changes in shapes, colors, a size larger than a pencil eraser, an irregular border, or development of new moles.
- Keep carbon monoxide and smoke detectors in your home functioning at all times. Change the batteries every 6 months or use a model that plugs into the wall.
- Do a monthly exam of your testicles. Gently roll each testicle between your thumb and fingers, feeling for any abnormal lumps. The best time to do this is after a hot shower or bath when the tissues are looser. Notify your caregivers of any lumps, tenderness or changes in size or shape immediately.
- Stay up to date with your tetanus shots and other required immunizations. You should have a booster for tetanus every 10 years. Be sure to get your flu shot every year, since 5%-20% of the U.S. population comes down with the flu. The flu vaccine changes each year, so being vaccinated once is not enough. Get your shot in the fall, before the flu season peaks. The table below lists important vaccines to get. Other vaccines to consider include:
  - Hepatitis A virus (to prevent a form of infection of the liver by a virus acquired from food), Varicella Zoster (a virus that causes shingles).
  - Meningococcal (against bacteria which cause a form of meningitis).
- Brush your teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste, and floss once a day. Good oral hygiene prevents tooth decay and gum disease. The problems can be painful, unattractive, and can cause other health problems. Visit your dentist for a routine oral and dental check up and preventive care every 6-12 months.
- The Body Mass Index or BMI is a way of measuring how much of your body is fat. Having a BMI above 27 increases the risk of heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, stroke and other problems related to obesity. Your caregiver can help determine your BMI and based on it develop an exercise and dietary program to help you achieve or maintain this important measurement at a healthful level.
- Wear seat belts whenever in a vehicle, whether a passenger or driver, and even for very short drives of a few minutes.
- If you bicycle, wear a helmet at all times.

Below is a summary of the most important preventative healthcare services that adult males should seek on a regular basis throughout their lives:

Preventative Care for Adult Males			
Preventative Service	**Ages 19-39**	**Ages 40-64**	**Ages 65 and over**
Schedule of medical visits	Every 5 years	Every 5 years	
Schedule of dental visits	Every 6-12 months	Every 6-12 months	
Health risk assessment and lifestyle counseling	Every 3-5 years	Every 3-5 years	Every 3-5 years
Blood pressure check**	Every 2 years	Every 2 years	Every 2 years
Total cholesterol check including HDL**	Every 5 years beginning at age 35	Every 5 years	Every 5 years through age 75, then optional.
Flexible sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy**		Every 5 years beginning at age 50	Every 5 years through age 80, then optional.
Prostate screening		Every year beginning at age 50	Every Year
Testicular exam	Monthly	Monthly	Monthly
FOBT (fecal occult blood test)		Every year beginning at age 50	Every year until 80, then optional.
Skin self-exam	Monthly	Monthly	Monthly
Tetanus-diphtheria (Td) immunization	Every 10 years	Every 10 years	Every 10 years
Influenza immunization**	Every year	Every year	Every year
Pneumococcal immunization**	Optional	Optional	Every 5 years
Hepatitis B immunization**	Series of 3 immunizations (if not done previously, usually given at 0, 1 to 2, and 4 to 6 months)	Check with your caregiver if vaccination not previously given.	Check with your caregiver if vaccination not previously given.
**Family history and personal history of risk and conditions may change your physician's recommendations.			

Document Released: 02/13/2003 Document Re-Released: 03/14/2011
ExitCare® Patient Information ©2011 ExitCare, LLC.