



Wellness at Any Age

Your health: What could be more important?

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle means enjoying friends, family and favorite activities throughout your life.

Regardless of your age, preventive health care is the key to staying ahead of illnesses and other health problems before they become critical. Taking steps to ensure your continued good health includes:

- Regular health check-ups with your Mercy primary care physician
- Scheduling screenings and vaccines based on your age and family/medical history
- Making positive lifestyle changes
- Contacting your Mercy primary care provider at the first sign of any problem

Your health is individual to you and is dependent on so many factors: family history, your own health history, your health habits and more.

Choosing a Healthy Lifestyle

In addition to regular screenings, immunizations and other routine preventive care, you can maintain your overall good health by making healthy lifestyle choices part of your daily routine.

If you plan to start a new diet or exercise program, discuss it with your Mercy primary care physician. He or she will help you formulate a plan best suited for you, one that will help you achieve your goals safely.

Making the investment in your health is the best thing you can do, and it's one that pays off over time. It's your health – make the most of it!

Things you can do to get – and stay – healthy include:

Don't smoke. Don't start, and if you already do, quit. In addition to harming your own health, secondhand smoke can be detrimental to your family, others around you – even your pets.

Quitting now will have an almost immediate impact on your health. In as little as 20 minutes your heart rate and blood pressure drop, and you lower your risk of cancers and other heart-related illnesses.

Maintain a healthy weight. Getting to – and maintaining – a healthy weight is important to your overall health. You don't need to follow the latest fad diet to do so; following a balanced diet that includes moderate amounts of proteins and carbohydrates, plenty of fruits and vegetables and limited amounts of fats will help you maintain a healthy weight. Keep portion sizes modest, and get regular moderate or vigorous exercise.

Exercise Regularly. Get up and move! Whether it's a simple evening stroll or intensive training for a triathlon, getting regular exercise is important for your overall health.

Great ways to stay active include bicycling, jogging, swimming...doing things you enjoy and making them part of your daily activities will help make exercise a regular part of your lifestyle. You don't need to buy fancy equipment or pay for expensive gym fees; even walking for as little as 30 minutes each



day promotes heart health and along with a sensible diet can help you keep your weight in check.

Eat Healthy. Making sensible food choices is as easy as changing the types of foods you eat. For example, eat bread and pasta – but choose whole grain bread and pasta instead of processed wheat.

Choose low-fat proteins such as fish, chicken or lean beef and limit the amount of processed meats such as hot dogs, bacon and cold cuts. Restrict the amount of sugar in your diet and eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables.

Making smarter choices will help you feel better and give you more energy, as well as reduce your risk for certain types of cancer.

Get Enough Sleep. Often overlooked, sleep is an essential component to maintaining health. In fact, ongoing sleep deprivation has been linked to increasing your risk for some chronic health problems. It's also been shown to increase your chances of getting sick, along with slowing your recovery time.

School-age children need an average of 9-11 hours of sleep, while teenagers need 8-10 hours and adults 7-9 hours.



Protect Yourself Outdoors. It's important to stay healthy on the inside – and on the outside, as well.

We tend to think of good health as simply eating right, exercising and getting proper medical treatment. However, it's equally important to safeguard your health when relaxing or playing outdoors.

Wear sunscreen when swimming or spending time in the sun – even in the winter, to keep your skin safe from overexposure. When spending time near wooded areas or remaining outside after dark, remember to use bug spray to repel mosquitoes, ticks and other biting insects. This will help prevent illnesses that can be spread via their bites. Check product labels and use repellents that contain DEET for maximum effectiveness.

Remember: Making changes to your lifestyle doesn't have to be overwhelming. Eating healthy foods in sensible portions, getting regular exercise and quitting smoking will go a long ways towards improving your health – and keeping you healthy. You can do it!

Your guide to preventative screening and exams

The following schedule is intended to serve as a general guide. Use it to begin a discussion with your Mercy primary care physician to plan your own course of treatment now and throughout the life of your care.

Women			
	18-39	40-65	Over 65
Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening			Get this one-time screening.

Women

	18-39	40-65	Over 65
Blood Pressure Screening	Have your blood pressure checked every two (2) years unless your blood pressure is high; then have it checked at least once a year. You can also frequently check it at pressure stations at grocery stores and pharmacies.	Have your blood pressure checked every two (2) years unless your blood pressure is high; then have it checked at least once a year. You can also frequently check it at pressure stations at grocery stores and pharmacies.	Have your blood pressure checked every two (2) years unless your blood pressure is high; then have it checked at least once a year. You can also frequently check it at pressure stations at grocery stores and pharmacies.
Breast Exam and Mammogram		Breast exams can be done at home and at your provider's office as part of your routine physical. Mammograms are generally 1-2 years, depending on your family history.	Breast exams can be done at home and at your provider's office as part of your routine physical. Mammograms are generally 1-2 years, depending on your family history, up to age 75.
Cholesterol Screening	Starting at age 20, get a cholesterol test regularly.	Get a cholesterol test regularly.	Get a cholesterol test regularly.

Women

	18-39	40-65	Over 65
Colon Cancer		Starting at age 50, a stool occult blood test every year. A flexible sigmoidoscopy every five (5) years. Colonoscopy every 10 years.	A stool occult blood test every year. A flexible sigmoidoscopy every five (5) years. Colonoscopy every 10 years.
Dental Exam	Once or twice a year for exam and cleaning.	Once or twice a year for exam and cleaning.	Once or twice a year for exam and cleaning.
Diabetes Screening	Get screened if you have a body mass index (BMI) greater than 25, have blood pressure higher than 135/80 or have risk factors in your health history.	Every three (3) years.	Every three (3) years.
Eye Exam	Every two (2) years.	Ages 40-54: Every 2-4 years. Ages 55-64: Every 1-3 years.	Every 1-3 years.
Flu Shot	Every year.	Every year.	Every year.

Women

	18-39	40-65	Over 65
Immunizations	Tetanus-diphtheria and acellular pertussis (Tdap) with a booster every 10 years. Meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MenACWY) to protect against bacterial meningitis.	Tetanus-diphtheria and acellular pertussis (Tdap) booster every 10 years.	Tetanus-diphtheria and acellular pertussis (Tdap) booster every 10 years. Pneumococcal vaccine.
Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) Vaccine	If you were born after 1956 ask your physician if you should receive the MMR vaccine.		
Osteoporosis		Discuss with your primary care physician.	Bone density test (DEXA scan).
Pelvic Exam and Pap Smear	Starting at age 21 and every 3 years thereafter. After age 30, if your Pap smears are normal then every five (5) years.	If your Pap smears are normal, then every five (5) years.	Women who have had three (3) negative tests in the previous 10 years and have not been diagnosed with cervical cancer or precancer, may discontinue Pap smears.

Women			
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Shingles Vaccine		One after age 60.	
Varicella Vaccine	Two (2) doses if you were born after 1980 and never had chicken pox or the varicella vaccine.		

Men			
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Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) Vaccine	If you were born after 1956 ask your physician if you should receive the MMR vaccine.		
Osteoporosis		Discuss with your primary care physician.	Bone mineral density test.
Prostate Cancer Screening		Discuss with your primary care physician.	Discuss with your primary care physician.
Shingles Vaccine		One after age 60.	
Varicella Vaccine	Two (2) doses if you were born after 1980 and never had chicken pox or the varicella vaccine.		