

Five for Fifty

You're 50 years old and you feel great. So why schedule an appointment with your doctor? Screenings save lives. Here are five diagnostic tests that are particularly important during this decade of your life.

Skin Cancer Screening:

Skin cancer accounts for at least half of all cancers and affects nearly one million Americans each year. The deadliest skin cancer is Melanoma and although it accounts for less than five percent of skin cancer cases, it is responsible for the majority of skin cancer deaths. A full-body screening by your primary care physician or dermatologist is an important step in identifying skin cancers. Additionally, by engaging in periodic self-checks, you will increase the likelihood of identifying potentially harmful growths. As a general rule of thumb, consider your ABC's as warning signs when examining growths: **A**symmetry, irregular **B**order, variation of **C**olor, **D**iameter > 6mm, and **E**levation.

Lipid Panel (Cholesterol) Screening:

The National Institutes of Health report that heart disease is the number one killer of men and women in the U.S. The higher your blood cholesterol level is, the greater your risk of developing heart disease. Doctors use a simple blood test, known as a lipid panel, to measure triglycerides, total cholesterol, LDL cholesterol ("bad" cholesterol) and HDL cholesterol ("good" cholesterol). Current recommendations suggest a lipid panel be drawn every five years beginning at age 25. Elevated cholesterol and triglycerides are treatable by lifestyle modifications and, if necessary, lipid-lowering medications.



Colorectal Cancer Screening:

Colorectal cancer is the third leading cause of cancer death in the U.S., according to the American Cancer Society. If diagnosed at an early, localized stage, the relative five-year survival rate is 90%. In order to keep your colon healthy, a screening colonoscopy is recommended every 10 years beginning at age 50. Colonoscopy is used to visualize the large intestine to look for polyps, colon cancer and other diseases. Two types of screenings are available, conventional and virtual, and the primary difference is how the colon is visualized. Conventional colonoscopy uses a flexible lighted tube, known as a colonoscope, while virtual colonoscopy uses a CT or MRI.

Breast Cancer Screening:

A screening mammogram is recommended annually beginning at age 40 to identify breast cancer in women. Studies show that breast cancer screening reduces the number of deaths from breast cancer, especially for those ages 50 and older. Both conventional mammography and digital mammography use x-rays to produce an image of the breast. Conventional mammography stores the image on x-ray film while digital mammography has the advantage of storing the image of the breast on a computer. This allows the radiologist to enhance or magnify the image for further evaluation. It also allows health care

providers to share image files electronically. In addition, there are studies to suggest that digital mammography may be better for detecting breast cancer in women with dense breasts.

Prostate Cancer Screening:

Every day 500 men are diagnosed with prostate cancer, according to the Prostate Cancer Foundation. Declining mortality trends suggest that early detection using the prostate-specific antigen test (PSA) or digital rectal exam (DRE) may be beneficial. Beginning at age 50, a baseline level should be drawn for men and monitored annually. A high PSA level may indicate prostate cancer, but the rate of change of PSA levels may be a more important indicator than the absolute value. If PSA levels are rising quickly, further testing is needed.

There is no better way to stay healthy than through prevention. By scheduling regular screenings you can monitor changes in your health and wellness that may ensure early detection and successful treatments. For more information about health screening guidelines, or to schedule an executive physical, please contact Healthnetwork Foundation.

Healthnetwork Foundation partners with over 30 top-tier medical institutions across America. If you have questions about cancer screenings or if you are interested in scheduling an executive physical, contact Healthnetwork.

One Call Starts It All: 866-968-2467, 440-893-0830
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