

Everyone should develop a lifetime plan to stay healthy. A healthy lifestyle, an understanding of personal health risks and the appropriate use of screening tests are all important parts of a plan.



Routine screening tests can be one of the most important personal health strategies. Screening tests are designed to detect disease or risk factors for disease before symptoms appear. Detecting disease early can lead to more effective treatment. Identifying risk factors for disease may reduce the chance of developing certain diseases or prevent them completely.

Much research on the development and effectiveness of various screening tests has been done in recent years. Although effective screening tests are widely available, many people do not take advantage of them. A screening test is not necessarily complicated or expensive. For example, a simple blood pressure check can detect elevated blood pressure, or hypertension, which is a risk factor for heart disease and stroke. Discovery can lead to early treatment and prevention of these adverse outcomes.

Common screening tests in addition to blood pressure measurement include checking your cholesterol value and blood sugar (diabetes). Cancer screening tests are available for colon cancer (starting at age 50), breast cancer (mammograms, annually starting at 40), cervical cancer (Pap test) and prostate cancer (blood PSA test starting at 50). . Personal risk factors can change the age at which testing begins and the frequency with which the tests are performed.

There are also other important strategies to stay healthy and prevent disease. In addition to specific screening tests reviewing your family history and lifestyle can help identify risk factors that may increase or decrease your chances of developing specific conditions. The best approach is to discuss a lifetime preventive strategy with your personal physician. Completing one of the many available health risk appraisal tools on the internet can help make you more informed about your personal risks and increase the focus and productivity of your discussions with your physician.

Have health questions? Send your questions to feedback@azfoothills.com for answers.



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For more than a century, Mayo Clinic has given patients peace of mind knowing they received care from the world's leading experts. Since opening in Arizona in 1987, Mayo Clinic continues its tradition of a team of specialists listening to thoroughly understand and find the answers to patients' health issues and concerns. Mayo Clinic's Executive Health Program combines Mayo's diagnostic expertise with the latest in preventive medicine for an individualized, thorough and expedited healthcare evaluation. To schedule an appointment, please call (480) 301-8088 or email: mca.executivehealth@mayo.edu. For corporate information, please contact Andrea Knapp at (480) 301-4864 or knapp.andrea@mayo.edu.