

CottageHouseCall

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Health Screenings: 30s and 40s

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Americans in their 30s and 40s often feel as though they're being pulled in every direction. Many are raising children, managing a career and caring for aging parents. This hectic lifestyle leaves little time for people to care for their own health and well-being. Health screenings at this age can be beneficial by both reinforcing what a person already knows about his or her good health and by detecting conditions in the early stages when they can be treated most effectively.

Most people have begun to make good health a priority by their 30s and are receiving regular check-ups. If they have not already, a person in this age group should develop an understanding of their individual health. Keeping track of basic information such as height, weight and blood type, as well as individual risk factors and family health history can be beneficial in maintaining good health. These factors can influence the timing and frequency of certain exams although general rules about health screenings do exist.

Dental exams should be performed yearly and vision should be checked at least once before the age of 40 and every two to four years after that. Everyone in this age group should have their blood pressure checked at least once every year. Experts recommend cholesterol exams at least every three years (if normal cholesterol) and people should seriously consider being screened for type 2 diabetes if they have significant risk factors. Women over the age of 40 should have their thyroid checked at age 35 and every few years after that. Regular vaccinations such as an annual flu shot and a tetanus booster every ten years are important. Also, skin cancer can be a concern for people in this age group, and a physician can determine whether exams should be performed. Individuals who use tobacco should be checked for certain cancers.

Some tests are gender-specific. Men generally begin having regular prostate exams at age 45, but sometimes these occur sooner. Women in this age group will continue to receive an annual pap test for cervical cancer just as in their 20s. To screen for breast cancer, women in their 30s should have a clinical breast exam every year and do their own self breast exam monthly.. Those in their 40s will have both a clinical exam and a mammogram annually. All women in this age group should conduct regular self-examinations. Women who are pregnant should be tested for a number of conditions and will need to consult with an Obstetrician.

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People in their 30s and 40s can lead a hectic lifestyle, and it may be hard to find time for everything. However, maintaining an appropriate schedule of health screenings can lead to both peace of mind and early detection of conditions that need to be addressed. Early detection often leads to more effective treatment. Contact your physician to determine a schedule of health screenings that meets your individual needs.

Test: Vision

Source: American Association of Ophthalmology
Frequency: At least every 2-3 years for healthy people in their 30s-40s.

Test: Dental (teeth, gums, tongue)

Source: American Dental Association
Frequency: Annual (for healthy people)

Test: Hearing

Source: Centers for Disease Control
Frequency: Every three years (for healthy people)

Test: Cholesterol

Source: Mayo Clinic
Frequency: Lipid test every three years (for healthy people)

Test: Blood pressure

Source: Mayo Clinic
Frequency: Every year

Test: Type 2 Diabetes

Source: American Diabetes Association
Frequency: At least once by age 30; possibly sooner depending on individual risk factors.

Test: Vaccinations

Source: Centers for Disease Control
Frequency: Annual flu shot; tetanus booster every ten years

Test: Thyroid

Source: WebMD
Frequency: Thyroid hormone test every 1-2 years (gender specific)

Test: Cervical cancer (women only)

Source: American Cancer Society
Frequency: Annual PAP test

Test: Breast Cancer (women only)

Source: American Cancer Society
Frequency: Regular self exams; women in their 30s – clinical breast exam every year; women in their 40s – Annual clinical breast exam and mammogram

Test: Prostate (men only)

Source: Mayo Clinic
Frequency: Start at age 45, sooner if certain risk factors are present.

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