

The Importance of Preventive Care

Preventive care is critical to your overall health. This type of healthcare includes screenings, exams, tests, and immunizations that identify health problems early on so you can take action to keep them from becoming chronic conditions. Here's a look into a few examples of preventive care:

- **Wellness Visit**—This type of healthcare visit goes by a lot of names, but it's essentially your annual exam. Your doctor checks your height, weight, heart rate, and blood pressure. A fasting blood draw is often done for this visit as well to check your cholesterol and glucose levels. Think of this as your general maintenance check, and make it a priority.
- **Immunization Vaccines**—Kids aren't the only ones who need vaccinations to help prevent health problems. There are several immunization vaccines recommended for adults, including protection against the flu, tetanus, diphtheria, and whooping cough. How many or how often you need specific vaccines will vary. Talk to your doctor for a recommended immunization schedule.
- **Colorectal Cancer Screening**—This preventive measure is recommended for men and women once they reach age 45. Colonoscopies are standard for this screening; however, the healthcare industry has started to embrace alternatives to aid colorectal cancer detection. Talk to your doctor about potential alternatives.
- **Breast Cancer Screening**—Mammograms are x-rays of the breasts to look for cancer. Most of the time, women can survive breast cancer if it is found and treated early enough. Around age 40, women should start talking to their doctors about when to get their first mammogram. From ages 50 to 74, women are advised to get a mammogram every two years.
- **Cervical Cancer Screening**—This screening for women is also known as a Pap test, which can help find abnormal or changed cervical cells before they become cancerous. It can also find cervical cancer in stages early enough to potentially cure the cancer. How often women should be tested generally depends on age, but it's always a good idea to check with your doctor.

- **Obesity Screening and Counseling**—If you're trying to achieve a healthy weight and considering your options or the best approach, your doctor can provide some guidance. This could include reviewing your body mass index with you (BMI) and identifying other potential health risks.
- **Type Two Diabetes Screening**—Diabetes can cause many health problems, and once you have diabetes, it can only be managed—not cured. The good news is that it's preventable. A healthy diet and regular exercise to maintain a healthy weight are essential to diabetes prevention. If you want to know more about your risk and prevention, schedule an appointment to talk with your doctor. Depending on your risk, your doctor may test you and recommend regular testing.
- **Depression Screening**—Depression is an illness that can affect your thoughts, moods, and activity level. If you think you may be experiencing depression, schedule a medical check-up and talk with your doctor about how you're feeling. Together, you can decide on the best course of action.

*Important note: Preventive care services are fully covered by your health insurance plan only when you receive these services, screenings, and tests from providers in your plan's network. If you receive these services from providers who are not in your plan's network, you will likely be responsible for some or all of the cost. If you're a PacificSource member, you can contact our Customer Service Representatives for more information about your benefits and covered preventive care services.

Sources: HealthFinder.gov, HealthCare.gov, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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