Women’s Health: Preventive Screenings

Part One

Bone Density Test
This test measures the density of your bones (your lower back, hip region, wrist and heel) to help determine your risk of developing osteoporosis, which is characterized by a loss of bone mass and makes bones more fragile and likely to break. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommends that women age 65 and older be routinely screened. The USPSTF also suggests that routine screenings begin at age 60 for women with an increased risk.

Dental Exam
The American Dental Association recommends regular dental checkups in which your dentist examines your teeth and gums. Regular dental exams will help detect tooth decay and oral cancer. In addition, your dentist can evaluate your bite and identify problems such as grinding your teeth or issues with your jaw joint.

Eye Exam
Eye examinations can determine whether you need glasses or contact lenses, and can identify new vision problems such as glaucoma, macular degeneration and cataracts. The American Academy of Ophthalmology recommends the following screening schedule:
• At least once between ages 20 and 29, and twice between ages 30 and 39.
• A baseline test at age 40, then as doctor recommends until age 64.
• Every one to two years beginning at age 65.

Hearing Test
A hearing test determines if you have hearing loss. The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association recommends screening at least every 10 years through age 50, and every three years after age 50.

Skin Exam
To check for skin cancer, your doctor will examine your skin from head to toe, looking for moles that are irregularly shaped, have varied colors, are asymmetric, are greater than the size of a pencil eraser, or have grown or changed since your last visit. The American Cancer Society recommends you have a skin exam every three years between the ages of 20 and 40, and every year thereafter. It is also important to check your own skin once a month.

Blood Pressure Screenings
Healthy women with normal blood pressure (119/79 or below) should receive blood pressure screenings at least every two years. Preventive blood pressure screening can lead to early detection of high blood pressure.

Did You Know...?
Preventive care, including regular doctor visits, is important for everyone. Women in particular should visit their doctors regularly in order to talk about their overall health, ask questions, establish a relationship with their doctor and get the recommended preventive health screenings.