

Tests to Find Cancer Early

Ask your doctor or nurse about these tests.

Cancer Type	Who	When	What	How Often
Breast cancer	Women*	Starting at age 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you notice any change in breasts, such as a lump, tell your doctor or nurse right away. You may choose to do BSE (breast self-exam) to find breast changes. Have an exam of your breasts by a doctor or nurse. 	Every year Every 3 years
		Starting at age 40 and older	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a mammogram (x-ray) of your breasts AND an exam of your breasts by a doctor or nurse. If you notice any change in your breasts, such as a lump, tell your doctor or nurse right away. You may choose to do BSE (breast self-exam) to find breast changes. 	Every year
Cervical cancer	Women**	Starting about 3 years after you start having sex but no later than 21	Have ONE of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The regular PAP or OR The newer liquid PAP test 	Every year Every 2 years
		Starting at age 30	If you have had 3 normal PAP tests in a row, you may have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The regular liquid PAP test OR A Pap test with the new HPV test IF you have NOT had 3 normal Pap tests in a row, then continue with your PAP tests every 1 or 2 years.	Every 2 to 3 years Every 3 years
Prostate cancer	African American men and men with a close family member with prostate cancer All other men	Starting at age 45	African American men and men with a close family member with prostate cancer before age 65 Talk to your doctor about the pros and cons of prostate cancer testing so you can decide if getting tested is the right choice for you. If you decide to be tested, you should have the PSA blood test with or without a rectal exam. How often you are tested will depend on your PSA level.	Every year
		Starting at age 50	All other men Talk to your doctor about the pros and cons of prostate cancer testing so you can decide if getting tested is the right choice for you. If you decide to be tested, you should have the PSA blood test with or without a rectal exam. How often you are tested will depend on your PSA level.	Every year
Colon cancer	Men and Women*	Starting at age 50	Have ONE of these tests: Tests that will find polyps and cancer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A test to look into the lower part of the colon (flexible sigmoidoscopy), OR An x-ray of the colon (barium enema), OR A test to look into the entire colon (colonoscopy), OR A CT scan of the entire colon Tests that will find mainly cancer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A test to check for blood in your stool, OR A Test to check for cancer cells in your stool Tests that have the best chance of finding both polyps and cancer should be your first choice when possible. Talk with your doctor or nurse to find out which tests you can get and then decide which test you want to have.	Every 5 years Every 5 years Every 10 years Every 5 years Every year We don't know how often it should be done
Other cancer	Women	Starting at age 20	Your doctor or nurse should check your thyroid gland, mouth, skin, lymph nodes, and ovaries.	Whenever you have your regular checkup
Other cancer	Men	Starting at age 20	Your doctor or nurse should check your thyroid gland, mouth, skin, lymph nodes, and testicles.	Whenever you have your regular checkup

*You may need to begin testing for colon cancer or breast cancer earlier or be tested more often if you are more likely than other people to have these cancers. Talk to your doctor about this.

** If you have had a hysterectomy (your uterus and cervix have been removed), you may choose to stop having the Pap test, unless the surgery was for cancer. If you are 35 or older and have had an inherited type of colon cancer called HNPCC or someone in your family has had this type of cancer, then you may need to be tested each year for cancer of the endometrium (lining of the uterus). This testing is done with a biopsy.

Be sure to tell your doctor or nurse if you have had any type of cancer or if your mother, father, brother, sister, or children have had cancer.



Don't use tobacco. If you do, ask your doctor or nurse about quitting.



Get at least 30 minutes of physical activity on 5 or more days of the week.



Eat a healthy diet with plenty of fruits and vegetables.



Maintain a healthy weight.



Drink less alcohol, if you drink at all.



Protect yourself from the sun.

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