

Preventive Health Maintenance and Risk Reduction

Ages 40-64

THE BASIC WELL WOMAN EXAM

Breast exam, pelvic exam and pap smear

Breast exam should be done yearly. Pelvic exam may not need to be done yearly if you have had your uterus and ovaries removed. Please ask for specific advice. When you are sexually active you are at risk for abnormal pap smears, pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. Pap smear is recommended yearly in most cases. If you have had a hysterectomy continued Pap tests are not usually needed. Testing for the sexually transmitted diseases Chlamydia and Gonorrhea should be done yearly if your partner has changed. Please request these tests if you are concerned. We have free brochures on request about the Pap test, preventing pregnancy and STDs.

Recommended laboratory testing

Dipstick urinalysis: ask for a *micro* urine if you think you have a urinary tract infection.

Hemoglobin

Cholesterol-every 5 years if last value was under 200. Fasting values are more accurate.

Fasting blood glucose-every 3 years after age 45. Fasting means nothing by mouth except water for 12 hours before the test.

TSH every 5 years to screen for thyroid disease.

If you have blood or urine tests done at another office please let us know so that we do not waste your money on tests that are not needed.

CONTRACEPTIVE ISSUES

If you do not want to be pregnant, contraception is needed until menopause has occurred. It is perfectly appropriate to use birth control pills until menopause, however, many couples consider IUD, vasectomy or tubal sterilization when they know their family is complete. We have more information about pregnancy in older mothers, contraceptive options and sterilization.

MENOPAUSE and PERIMENOPAUSE

Perimenopause is a period of gradual change due to declining hormone levels that may occur over 10 to 15 years before actual menopause (average age 51-52). During this time you may notice such things as less predictability in periods, hot flashes and emotional changes. Help is available. I recommend considering hormone replacement therapy when appropriate. The health benefits of HRT are greater than the risks for most women, however, every woman is different and you deserve a personalized plan. There are alternate ways of treating many menopausal symptoms such as hot flashes and mood swings. The lack of estrogen after menopause affects bones, cholesterol, the urinary tract, and sexual function. We have more information about perimenopause, menopause and HRT. Please see *WHI Key Points* for a summary of results from the Women's Health Initiative study published in July 2002.

SCREENING

I advise a yearly **mammogram** from 40. **Bone density testing (DXA)** to screen for osteoporosis is advised for women at menopause. See the attached list from the National Osteoporosis Foundation (NOF) for additional risk factors. Intervals for the DXA vary from 1 to 5 years. I recommend **colon screening** beginning at age 50 with a colonoscopy. Colonoscopy is done with sedation by general or colorectal surgeons and gastroenterologists and does require a referral. Ask for more information about screening for colon cancer.

WELLNESS

It is important to maintain your **weight** in the normal range. Please see the attached chart for normal weight ranges. Overweight and obesity increase your risk for health problems such as diabetes and high blood pressure. Regular **physical exercise** is important in maintaining wellness for your body and for your emotional health. Walking for 30 minutes 3 to 5 days a week is good exercise, but other forms of exercise such as working out at the gym or playing a sport are also good. If you need more advice about nutrition or exercise please ask.

Remember to maintain your **immunizations**. You need a tetanus booster once every 10 years. Ask for a brochure on immunization if needed. I advise a daily **multivitamin** and adequate daily **calcium(1000 mg) + vitamin D(1000 units)**.

RISK AVOIDANCE

Please avoid **tobacco** in any form. Nicotine in tobacco is one of the most addictive drugs that we know. Smoking is one of the biggest preventable factors in the development of many health problems such as heart disease, cancer (including cervix cancer), and pregnancy complications. Use **alcohol** in moderation. Please avoid street drugs.

YOUR RESULTS

All tests done in this office will be result to you by phone. If you have not received results after 10 days please call 482-2360 and ask for the nurse.