



Take charge of your health and well-being

The benefits of cancer screenings and early detection

Staying up to date with recommended cancer screenings and knowing your family medical history are 2 important ways you can help protect your health and well-being. Cancer is a leading cause of death worldwide, accounting for nearly 1 in 6 deaths. But with early detection and effective treatment, many cancers can be cured.

Use the guide below to help you keep track of your screenings and medical history.

Screenings

While recommended cancer screenings can vary depending on your personal medical history, here are the general guidelines for when people at average risk should start screening for certain types of cancer:

- After each screening, your health care provider will advise when you should have your next screening, based on your results and risk factors.
- If any test results are abnormal, follow your health care provider’s recommendation for follow-up tests and next steps.
- If you have concerns at any age, contact your health care provider for guidance.



February 4

World Cancer Day

Following regular screening recommendations can support early detection. With early detection and effective treatment, many cancers can be cured.

Type of cancer	When to begin
Breast cancer	Conduct self-breast exams regularly. If you note any unexplained changes in how your breasts look or feel, consult a medical doctor. Age 40 – Mammogram, an x-ray of your breasts.
Cervical cancer	Age 21 – Pap test (also called pap smear) to collect cells from your cervix to check for signs of cancer.
Colon and rectal cancer and polyps	Age 45 – Several tests are available – your doctor can make a recommendation for you.
Lung cancer	Age 50 if you have a 20 pack-year or more smoking history , and smoke now or have quit within the past 15 years
Prostate cancer	Starting at age 50 , men should discuss the benefits and risks of prostate screening with your physician to determine what is right for you.
Skin cancer	All ages – conduct self-exams monthly. If you have any questions or note any unusual changes in your skin or moles, consult a physician.

Please note: These screenings are among the most commonly recommended. However, depending on your age and medical history, your doctor may recommend screenings at earlier or more regular intervals for you.

Keeping track of your family medical history

Some chronic diseases can run in families. If a biological relative has had one, it might mean you're at a higher risk for it. That's why sharing your family's medical history with your health care team is important.

Below, fill in any known medical conditions or causes of death for your biological relatives, as best you can. For those you don't know, ask someone who may have more information.

Be sure to include:

- Major medical conditions, including physical and mental health
- First-, second- and third-degree relatives
- Age when diagnosed
- Age and cause of death (if applicable)
- Ethnic background

Keep this information list on hand for any health care appointments.

Great-grandmother	Great-grandfather	Great-grandmother	Great-grandfather	Great-grandmother	Great-grandfather	Great-grandmother	Great-grandfather
Maternal grandmother		Maternal grandfather		Paternal grandmother		Paternal grandfather	
Aunt	Aunt	Aunt	Mom	Dad	Aunt	Aunt	Aunt
Uncle	Uncle	Uncle			Uncle	Uncle	Uncle
Sibling (full or half)	Sibling (full or half)	Me	Sibling (full or half)	Sibling (full or half)			

Sources

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