

IMPROVING HEALTH FOR WOMEN



DO YOU RECEIVE THESE RECOMMENDED HEALTH SCREENINGS?

- Adults should have blood pressure checked at age 18 and repeated every 1-5 years, depending on age and risk factors.
- For all adults, cholesterol should be checked every 4-6 years, if normal.
- Blood sugar or A1C screening begins at age 45 (for average risk); repeat every 3 years, if normal.
- Adults should have regular dental exams, as recommended by their dentist, usually once or twice a year.
- The American Academy of Ophthalmology recommends an eye exam and vision testing at age 40. At age 65 vision screening should be every 1-2 years.
- If you have any hearing changes talk with your health care provider.
- Women age 65 years or older (earlier for increased risk) should have a bone density test.
- Women age 40 and older should have a yearly clinical breast exam. Younger women might also choose to. All women should be familiar with their own breasts, to be aware of abnormal changes.
- Women ages 50-74 (earlier if high risk) should have a biennial mammogram.
- Women ages 21-65 should have a Pap &/or HPV test to screen for cervical cancer. Screening should be repeated every 3-5 years, depending on age and type of screening test used.
- Age 50 (earlier if high risk), begin colon cancer screening, either by stool test or visualization of colon.
- Immunizations: **Tetanus:** Everyone should receive 1 dose of Tdap, then a Td or Tdap booster every 10 years; pregnant women should receive a Tdap every pregnancy. **Influenza (Flu):** Annually, especially if high risk or pregnant. **Pneumonia:** Once after age 65 (earlier if at risk or a smoker). Talk to your doctor about the newer PCV13 after age 65. **Measles:** MMR vaccine, 1 or 2 doses as indicated. **Hepatitis B** series, all adults at risk, especially diabetics. **Hepatitis A** series, if at risk. **HPV** series, ages 9-26 years; if over age 26, talk to your doctor. **Varicella:** 2 doses, unless immune or close contact with immunocompromised persons. **Zoster (shingles)** vaccine, once after age 50. Check with your health care provider for needed immunizations.
- Ovarian Cancer: Screening for ovarian cancer is not recommended. Talk to your doctor about genetic testing if you have a family history that might indicate increased risk. See your doctor if you have symptoms.

BENEFITS OF FAMILY PLANNING

Family planning services include service for both men and women. Family planning services help you plan when you and your partner want to become pregnant, provide resources to prevent unwanted pregnancies and provide other health services to promote a healthy pregnancy and baby when you are ready to become pregnant. Services include pregnancy testing/counseling, contraceptive services, STD testing, preconception health services/counseling and basic infertility services. Contraception options include intrauterine device (IUD), hormonal implant, birth control pills, Depo Provera injection, condom, natural family planning and other contraceptive methods. The emergency contraceptive pill (ECP) is available and should be taken as soon as possible after unprotected sex, but can be effective up to 72 hours.

PERSISTENT HIGH RISK HPV CAN CAUSE CERVICAL CANCER

Human Papillomavirus (HPV), a sexually transmitted disease, causes nearly all cervical cancers. Some people don't develop symptoms, but can still spread HPV. Condoms may offer some protection but HPV can spread by contact with infected areas not covered by condoms. Often the immune system will clear HPV, but if it doesn't and the infection persists for more than two years, there's increased risk of cervical changes which could turn into cancer. Pap test for cervical cancer screening is recommended for women beginning at age 21. Ask your health care provider for recommendation on Pap and HPV testing and about the HPV vaccine, recommended for ages 11-12 but available for ages 9-26. HPV vaccine can reduce your chance of acquiring up to 90% of HPV-related cancers.

UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING MENOPAUSE (“THE CHANGE”)

As a woman enters mid-life she may experience physical and emotional changes caused by a normal decrease of estrogen, a hormone produced by the ovaries. This decrease in estrogen takes place over a few years (perimenopause) before the last menstrual period (menopause). Symptoms of lower estrogen levels include

heavy and/or irregular periods, hot flushes (“flashes”), night sweats, mood swings, trouble sleeping, vaginal dryness resulting in painful sex, and inability to concentrate or remember things. Discuss with your health care provider ways to manage the symptoms of menopause, including the pros and cons of hormone replacement.

OSTEOPOROSIS PREVENTION AND TREATMENT

As women enter menopause and beyond, bones tend to become thinner and weaker as a result of less estrogen. This sometimes leads to a condition called osteoporosis (os-teo-por-o-sis), or “brittle bone disease”. Thin, weak bones can result in breaks in the hip, spine, or wrists and cause a hunchback appearance. Osteoporosis usually doesn’t cause symptoms until a bone breaks. A *bone density test* provides a painless way to determine if you have osteoporosis and if treatment is needed. You can reduce your risk of developing osteoporosis by getting plenty of weight-bearing exercise (like walking), including plenty of calcium and vitamin D in your diet, avoiding tobacco use, and limiting alcohol consumption. Ask your healthcare provider how to add more calcium and vitamin D to your diet and if you should take supplements.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE/SEXUAL ASSAULT: IT WON’T JUST GO AWAY

Domestic violence is physical, verbal, or emotional mistreatment between two people. It can happen to anyone regardless of education, income, race, age, religion, or marital status and it is against the law.

Abusers don’t stop in spite of their promises and regrets but, according to research and statistics, over time the abuse almost always gets worse. If you find yourself in a situation where you or your children are being mistreated, get in touch with someone who can help such as a social worker, physician, nurse, counselor, or another trusted individual. Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at **1-800-799-SAFE (7233)** for more information. Always have a safe place to go if needed and in an emergency situation call 911.

Sexual Assault is any sexual act without your consent, with a person who may be a stranger, acquaintance, spouse, family member, or intimate partner. Call the National Sexual Assault Hotline at **1-800-656-HOPE (4673)** for more information. The Kentucky Child/Adult Abuse Protective Service Reporting Hotline is **1-877-597-2331**.

HEART ATTACKS, STROKES, DIABETES AND LUNG CANCER ARE NOT JUST FOR MEN!

FACT: Heart disease is the leading cause of death for women in the United States; 1 in 5 female deaths.

FACT: Lung cancer is the number one cause of cancer deaths in women; breast cancer is number two.

FACT: Diabetes increases the risk of serious health problems- heart attack, stroke, kidney failure, blindness.

FACT: Being overweight increases the chance of developing diabetes, high blood pressure & heart disease.

FACT: Smoking increases the chance of osteoporosis, high blood pressure, heart disease, blood vessel disease, cancer of the mouth, throat, lung & cervix, and lung conditions such as asthma, emphysema, and bronchitis.

Children exposed to second hand smoke are more likely to have ear infections, asthma, lung infections, as well as an increased risk of dying from SIDS (crib death).

STAY ACTIVE TO IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH AND MOOD

Exercise benefits both the body and mind. It decreases anxiety, helps control weight and blood pressure, boosts the immune system, elevates the mood, maintains bone health and increases strength and flexibility, improves sleep patterns, reduces arthritis pain, helps to control or prevent diabetes, and decreases the risk of heart disease and stroke. Research has proven that low to moderate physical activity (such as brisk walking, swimming, yard work/gardening, dancing, tennis, bicycling) for just 30 minutes–1 hour on most days can dramatically improve your health. Always check with your health care provider before beginning an exercise program.

A SIMPLE RECIPE FOR HEALTHY LIVING

- ☺ Stop smoking and avoid secondary smoke (Ask your health department provider for assistance)
- ☺ Exercise regularly
- ☺ Maintain a normal weight, blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar levels
- ☺ Eat at least 5 fruits or vegetables every day (adequate diet also includes low fat/high fiber foods)
- ☺ Limit or avoid alcohol and other substances that can be abused
- ☺ Safe proof your home to prevent accidents
- ☺ Find a medical home and talk with your health care provider about what annual exams you need
- ☺ Always use your seatbelt
- ☺ Work with your health care provider to set *realistic* goals for yourself and have some fun!