

Top Threats to Your Health and What You Can Do

1. Heart Disease and Stroke

- **Don't smoke.** If you do, quitting cuts your chance of a heart attack in half after 1 year

- **Blood pressure** – check yearly and treat if high (over 140/90)

- **Diabetes**- check every 3 years if at risk or if runs in family

- **Consider taking a statin**

Statin cholesterol medicine can lower the chance of heart attacks by 20-30% -- even in those who have good cholesterol numbers- these meds do more than just lower cholesterol.

Current guidelines suggest taking meds if your risk of heart disease in the next 10 years is over 7.5% -- which includes most men over 65.

- **Know the symptoms** and don't wait to call for help

A heart attack can cause pain, heaviness, or pressure in the chest, neck or arms. Nausea, shortness of breath and sweating can also occur.

A stroke or brain attack can start as sudden weakness on one side of the body, difficulty speaking, understanding, or walking
If you think you may be having a heart attack or stroke, call 911; the longer symptoms occur, the more damage can be done

2. Cancer

- If it runs in the family, you may need tests earlier or more often than recommended for those at average risk

- **Lung cancer**- If you have smoked more than 1 pack/day for 30 years and are between age 55 and 79, discuss the option of a low-dose CT scan to try to detect lung cancer earlier

- **Colon cancer**- Colonoscopy (telescope exam of the large intestine) starting at 50 and repeated every 10 years (if normal) can catch small growths before they can turn cancerous

- **Prostate cancer**- Consider PSA blood test and digital rectal exam yearly depending on your risk up to age 75

*realize that the PSA test is far from perfect (it overcalls the chance of cancer which leads to anxiety and further testing to determine if cancer is present);

*not all prostate cancers cause death or disability

* treatments for prostate cancer can have significant side-effects (such as impotence and urine leakage)

- **Skin cancer**- Wear a hat and sunscreen whenever in the sun; have moles checked that change in size, shape or color

- Eat a **healthy diet**, low in saturated fat and high in fruits and vegetables. No vitamin or supplement has been shown to decrease the risk of cancer.

3. Chronic Lung Disease

- **Quit smoking.** It is never too late to stop ongoing lung damage. Ask about options to help you quit.

- Get checked if you have symptoms (shortness of breath, chronic cough, wheezing). Good treatments are available.

- Get immunized against pneumonia (once) and the flu (yearly)

4. Accidents- most are preventable

- Falls are your biggest risk as you get older. Eliminate tripping hazards, install grab bars, minimize work on ladders.

5. Depression and Suicide

- If life is getting you down, let us know. Like other medical problems, depression can be successfully treated.

6. Plan for the end of life

- Have a Living Will and/or Power of Attorney for Health Care

- How you live today can make a big difference in preparing for death—reconcile with yourself, God and family.

Recommendations for Healthy Living

1. Don't smoke. Ask if you need help quitting
2. Maintain a healthy weight.
3. Eat healthy foods. Eat lots of fruits, vegetables and fiber.
Eat less animal fat and processed foods
4. Exercise. Get on your feet! Work up to walking or moderate exercise 30 minutes at least 5 days a week.
5. Listen to your body-- when things aren't right, get it checked out
6. Know your medications- bring them to appointments.
Check to see if your OTC meds and supplements are safe.
7. Get enough sleep and avoid over the counter sleep aides
8. Beware of falls- get grab bars and handrails if needed
9. Limit alcohol to 2 drinks a day. Ask for help if alcohol has become a problem for you.
10. Let us know if you feel depressed for more than 2 weeks or if you feel suicidal.

Prevent problems now

Immunizations

- tetanus-pertussis – every 10 years
- flu shot- yearly
- pneumonia vaccine- one time at 65
- shingles vaccine – one time

Blood tests

- cholesterol- at least every 5 years
- blood sugar- if overweight or diabetes in family
- Hepatitis C test- one time for all baby boomers
- PSA- up to age 75 if life expectancy over 10 yrs

Cancer screening

- Colonoscopy- every 10 yrs or as recommended

Bone density test – at 70 or sooner if at risk

Our Goal... Your Good Health

Recommendations for Healthy Living
from Your Family Physician

Men 65 and older/
Medicare Wellness Exams

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