



May is About Women's Health

Check-Up Checklist:

Things to Do Before Your Next "Well Woman Visit".

Getting check-ups is one of many things you can do to help stay healthy and prevent disease and disability.

THE ROUTINE CHECK-UP FOR WOMEN

Health screenings provide a lifestyle check-up and the opportunity for physicians to detect conditions or diseases in early stages.

You've made the appointment to see your health care provider. You've reviewed the instructions on how to prepare for certain tests. You've done the usual paperwork. Done, right? Not quite.

Before your next check-up, make sure you do these four things.

1. Find out if you are due for general screenings or vaccinations.

Have you had the recommended screening tests based on your age, general health, family history, and lifestyle? Check with your health care provider to see if its time for any vaccinations, follow-up exams, or tests. For example, it might be time for you to get a Pap test, mammogram, prostate cancer screening, colon cancer screening, sexually transmitted disease screening, blood pressure check, tetanus shot, eye check, or other screening.

Despite increased awareness over the past decade, only 54% of women recognize that heart disease is their number 1 killer.

2. Write down a list of issues and questions to take with you.

Review any existing health problems and note any changes.

- Have you noticed any body changes, including lumps or skin changes?
- Are you having pain, dizziness, fatigue, problems with urine or stool, or menstrual cycle changes?
- Have your eating habits changed?
- Are you experiencing depression, anxiety, trauma, distress, or sleeping problems?

If so, note when the change began, how it's different from before, and any other observation that you think might be helpful.

Be honest with your provider. If you haven't been taking your medication as directed, exercising as much, or anything else, say so. You may be at risk for certain diseases and conditions because of how you live, work, and play. Your provider develops a plan based partly on what you say you do. Help ensure that you get the best guidance by providing the most up-to-date and accurate information about you.

Be sure to write your questions down beforehand. Once you're in the office or exam room, it can be hard to remember everything you want to know. Leave room between questions to write down your provider's answers.



3. Review your family health history.

Are there any new conditions or diseases that have occurred in your close relatives since your last visit? If so, let your health care provider know. Family history might influence your risk of developing heart disease, stroke, diabetes, or cancer. Your provider will assess your risk of disease based on your family history and other factors. Your provider may also recommend things you can do to help prevent disease, such as exercising more, changing your diet, or using screening tests to help detect disease early.

4. Family Health History Checklist: Adults

Talk to your family. The most important relatives to include in your family health history are your parents, brothers and sisters, and your children, grandparents, uncles and aunts, nieces and nephews, and half-brothers and half-sisters.

Ask questions. To find out about your risk for chronic diseases, ask your relatives about which of these diseases they have had and when they were diagnosed.

Questions can include:

Do you have any chronic diseases, such as heart disease or diabetes, or health conditions such as high blood pressure or high cholesterol?

Have you had any other serious diseases, such as cancer or stroke?

How old were you when each of these diseases and health conditions was diagnosed?

What is our family's ancestry – from what countries did our ancestors come to the United States?

For relatives who have died, be sure to ask about cause and age of death.

Record the information. Write this information down, and be sure to update it from time to time. To organize the information in your family health history you could use a free web-based tool such as the Surgeon General's My Family Health Portrait. My Family Health Portrait allows you to share this information easily with your doctor. <https://phgkb.cdc.gov/FHH/html/index.html>



Share family health history information with your doctor and other family members. Your family health history can give you an idea of your risk for chronic diseases like cancer, heart disease and diabetes, but it is not the only factor to consider. If you are concerned about diseases that are common in your family, talk with your doctor at your next visit. A doctor can evaluate all of the factors that may affect your risk of some diseases, including family health history, and can recommend ways to reduce that risk.

Act on your family health history. Having a family health history of a disease does not mean that you or your family members will definitely get that disease. It is important that you talk with your doctor about steps that you can take to lower your chances of getting the disease.

Resources:

<http://www.familyhealthhistory.org/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/about/index.htm>

<https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/index.htm>

<https://health.gov/myhealthfinder/topics/everyday-healthy-living/sexual-health/get-your-well-woman-visit-every-year>

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