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Adult Health Screening Timeline: Prevention and Promotion Guide

Regular health screenings are vital for catching potential medical issues early, often before any symptoms appear. This guide outlines the recommended screening intervals for healthy adults based on national health promotion guidelines.

Note: If you have a family history of specific conditions, chronic health issues, or unique risk factors, your provider may recommend starting these screenings earlier or repeating them more frequently.

Cardiovascular and Metabolic Health

Blood Pressure Screening

- **Ages 18 to 39:** Every 3 to 5 years if your blood pressure is consistently normal (less than 120/80 mmHg) and you have no other risk factors. Screen annually if your blood pressure is 120-129/80.
- **Ages 40 and Older:** Annually.
- **Tip:** Learn how to accurately track your vitals at home by reviewing the [Good Health Outcomes Blood Pressure Guide](#).

Cholesterol (Lipid Panel)

- **Ages 20 to 40:** Every 4 to 6 years to assess cardiovascular risk, unless a family history of early heart disease warrants closer monitoring.
- **Ages 40 to 75:** Every 1 to 2 years, as risk naturally rises with age.

Type 2 Diabetes and Prediabetes

- **Ages 35 to 70:** Every 3 years for adults who are overweight or obese. Screenings are conducted using a fasting blood glucose test or an A1C test.

Cancer Screenings

Colorectal Cancer

- **Ages 45 to 75:** Regular screening is strongly recommended for all adults. Options include a colonoscopy every 10 years, a CT colonography every 5 years, or annual stool-based tests (like FIT or Cologuard).
- **Ages 76 to 85:** Decisions are individualized based on overall health and prior screening history.
- **Ages 40 to 74:** A screening mammogram is recommended every 2 years. Talk to your provider by age 40 to discuss whether you should begin screening earlier based on your personal risk profile.

Cervical Cancer (For Individuals with a Cervix)

- **Ages 21 to 29:** A Pap smear alone every 3 years.
- **Ages 30 to 65:** An HPV test alone every 5 years, a Pap smear alone every 3 years, or co-testing (both tests together) every 5 years.

Lung Cancer

- **Ages 50 to 80:** Annually using a low-dose CT scan, *only* if you have a 20 pack-year smoking history and currently smoke or have quit within the past 15 years.
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Infectious Diseases and Bone Health

HIV and STI Screenings

- **Ages 15 to 65:** Everyone should be screened for HIV at least once in their lifetime.
- **Regular Screening:** Annual or more frequent screenings for HIV, Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, and Syphilis are recommended based on individual behavioral risk factors or new sexual partners.
- **Hepatitis C:** All adults should receive a one-time screening test in their lifetime.

Osteoporosis (Bone Density)

- **Women Ages 65 and Older:** A baseline DEXA bone density scan to screen for osteoporosis.
- **Men and Younger Women:** Screen earlier only if clinical risk factors (such as long-term steroid use, low body weight, or history of fractures) are present.

The above information was reviewed and validated by David Campbell-O'Dell, DNP, APRN-IP, FNP-BC, FAANP