



BlueCross BlueShield  
of Illinois

# Staying Healthy

Your Lifetime guide to preventive health

## Live well at every age

**P**reventive care is key to a healthier life. But keeping track of current recommendations isn't always easy. These guidelines are a handy reminder of preventive services that are advised for yourself and your family.

The recommended shots, tests and checkups are listed by age and sex, covering every family member from birth through maturity. The guidelines are based on professional association and government sources, as well as input from physicians.

In addition to these guidelines, we also offer a wide variety of online health and wellness information. Visit our Web site at [www.bcbsil.com](http://www.bcbsil.com) for details.

Keep in mind that these guidelines are intended for the average healthy person. Speak to your doctor about what measures you need based on your own health status. For coverage information, consult your benefit materials, visit our Web site or call us.

# The importance of a healthy start

## PRE-CONCEPTION

### *Being a good parent starts now*

Before you try to conceive, depending on your risk factors, your physician may recommend screenings for genetic disorders, tuberculosis, HIV and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). If you haven't already been immunized, rubella and hepatitis B vaccinations may be recommended. Your physician may counsel you about proper nutrition and abstaining from smoking and drinking alcohol during pregnancy, and monitor any pre-existing conditions.

## EARLY PRENATAL CARE

### *Give your baby the best beginning*

As soon as you know you are pregnant, make plans to see your physician. Schedule your first visit within the first trimester (three months) of your pregnancy. At this time, you may undergo your first prenatal screening. After the initial doctor's visit, you'll usually see your physician every four weeks, up to week 29 of pregnancy. Between 29 and 36 weeks, you'll generally see your physician every two to three weeks, and weekly from 36 weeks until delivery.

At each visit, your physician will monitor the progress of your pregnancy and screen for possible complications. For example, your doctor may check for gestational diabetes at 24 to 28 weeks.

### *While pregnant, make sure you:*

- ♥ Eat a healthy, nutrient-rich diet
- ♥ Take a multivitamin with folic acid
- ♥ Discuss with your physician physical activity during pregnancy and preparing for childbirth, including classes, signs of labor and plans for your delivery

## AFTER THE BABY ARRIVES

### *Your health is just as important*

Once your baby has arrived, you may be focused only on your little one's health. Don't neglect your own. Four to six weeks after your baby's birth, see your physician for a physical exam to make sure you're recovering well from the delivery. Make sure you have the recommended regular screenings and tests.

At this visit, your physician may review family planning and birth control options, as well as any limitations and restrictions you should be aware of.

## YOUR BABY AND YOUNG CHILD

### *Regular checkups are key*

Your child should visit the doctor regularly for physical examinations. Periodic checkups allow the physician to administer immunizations, monitor growth, check for abnormalities and provide developmental, behavioral and prevention counseling. This may include topics such as sleep position, injury prevention, violence prevention and nutrition.

Most doctors recommend eight exams during the first year of life (*newborn, 2 to 4 days, by 1 month, and at 2, 4, 6, 9 and 12 months*), and three visits during the second year (*at 15, 18 and 24 months*). Your child's primary care physician (PCP) will most likely also want to schedule a checkup at ages 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8, and then annually from age 10. Keep in mind these are general guidelines. Your child's physician will determine an appropriate exam schedule.

During these wellness visits, make sure that your child receives the proper immunizations (*see the chart next page*). It's important to keep immunizations

## Taking charge of your own health

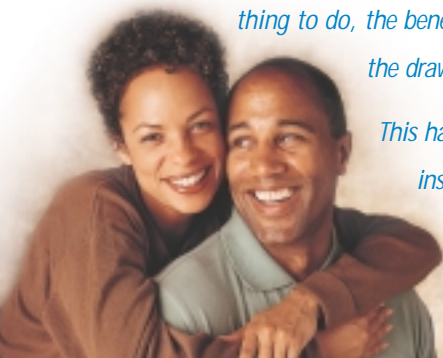
*It's easy to think of immunizations as a preventive measure that's needed to keep your child healthy. But adults need them too. Although "getting a shot" is not always a pleasant thing to do, the benefits of vaccinations far outweigh the drawbacks.*

*This handy guide will help you learn the ins and outs of adult immunizations.*

**Diphtheria-tetanus booster** — Necessary every 10 years throughout adulthood.

**Flu shot** — Recommended annually beginning at age 50. It is also recommended annually between the ages of 18 and 49 if you have certain chronic illnesses (such as heart or lung disease or diabetes), are in the second or third trimester of pregnancy during the flu season or are immunocompromised. You should receive your flu shot in the fall to help provide maximum protection during the peak of flu season (generally late December through early March).

**Pneumococcal vaccine** — Protects against pneumococcal infection, which is responsible for up to half of all cases of pneumonia. You need a vaccination if you are age 65 or older and have never received the vaccine or are not sure you have received



Vaccine	Range of recommended ages						Catch-up vaccination					
	Birth	1 Month	2 Months	4 Months	6 Months	12 Months	15 Months	18 Months	24 Months	4-6 Years	11-12 Years	13-18 Years
Hepatitis B	Hep B #1									Hep B Series		
		Hep B #2		Hep B #3								
Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (DTaP) and Tetanus/diphtheria (Td)			DTaP	DTaP	DTaP		DTaP			DTaP	Td	
Haemophilus Influenzae Type b*			Hib	Hib	Hib	Hib						
Inactivated Polio			IPV	IPV	IPV					IPV		
Measles, Mumps, Rubella						MMR #1				MMR #2	MMR #2	
Varicella (Chicken Pox)						Varicella			Varicella			
Pneumococcal			PCV	PCV	PCV	PCV						

up to date. Until he or she receives all the required doses, your child does not have adequate immunity and is more susceptible to childhood diseases.

Your child's hearing should be assessed by 1 month of age, and head circumference should be measured regularly through age 2. Vision, hearing, height and weight should be assessed at each routine exam. Periodic diagnostic tests, such as urinalysis to check for kidney problems and a blood test to check for anemia, are important to detect potential problems that may need medical attention. Your child may also be tested for blood lead levels and cholesterol, depending on

particular risk factors. Tuberculosis testing is recommended for children at high risk. Dental visits should start at 1 to 3 years of age. Your child's PCP can also provide developmental and behavioral progress reports and give advice on nutrition and injury prevention.

#### THROUGH THE TEEN YEARS *Becoming an adult*

Your child should visit his or her PCP each year between the ages of 10 and 17. Physical exams track a child's physical, mental and emotional development. In addition to updating growth records and performing a physical, your child's PCP will perform tests as needed for vision and hearing, administer blood

tests for anemia and a urine test, and provide necessary immunizations.

Counseling is an important aspect of adolescent wellness checkups. Your child's PCP may address topics such as smoking, alcohol, sex and substance abuse.

All sexually active adolescents should be screened for sexually transmitted diseases once a year. Sexually active females should have an annual pelvic exam, as well as a Pap test. The initial Pap test should be performed within three years of sexual activity, but no later than age 21. Subsequent Pap tests should be scheduled every one to two years, depending on the type of test.

it; received one more than five years ago and you were younger than 65 at the time; or are between the ages of 18 and 64 and have a chronic condition, such as diabetes, heart disease or sickle-cell disease.

**Hepatitis A vaccine** — Recommended for individuals at increased risk for hepatitis A, such as those who have blood clotting-factor disorders, liver disease or engage in high-risk behaviors such as illegal drug use.

**Hepatitis B vaccine** — Recommended if you have not previously been vaccinated and are in a high-risk group, including: occupational exposure, dialysis patients, more than one sexual partner within six months or use blood products.

**Measles and mumps immunization** — Recommended if you were born after 1957, if you haven't had the measles, mumps or an immunization, or are lacking evidence of immunity. Some people may need two doses of the measles vaccine.

**Rubella immunization** — Recommended for women of child-bearing age who are lacking antibodies against the disease.

**Varicella (chicken pox) vaccine** — Recommended if you have not already had chicken pox and may be potentially exposed to individuals who have chicken pox. Also highly recommended if you live or work in an area where chicken pox transmission may easily occur, such as living with children or working in a school or in health care.

*This information is not intended to replace your doctor's advice. Talk to your doctor to see if these immunizations are right for you.*



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# A health checklist for adults

Most of us expect our primary care physician (PCP) to treat illnesses and provide routine screenings. Your PCP can also serve as your partner in health care. To get the most from this partnership, inform your doctor about any medications you take and emergency or specialty care you receive. Also let your PCP know if you'd like counseling on any health or wellness topics.

## All adults

- [ ] **Blood pressure check** — Every two years, starting at age 18.
- [ ] **Total and HDL cholesterol check** — Recommended for men age 35 and older and women age 45 and older. Men ages 20 to 35 and women ages 20 to 45 who have other risk factors for coronary heart disease should also be screened. Screening should be repeated approximately every five years if the results are normal.
- [ ] **Colorectal cancer screenings** — If you're at average risk for colorectal cancer, you should be screened beginning at age 50. The screening may include one of the following: an annual fecal occult blood test; a flexible sigmoidoscopy every five years; an annual fecal occult blood test plus a flexible sigmoidoscopy every five years; a double-contrast barium enema every five years; or a colonoscopy every 10 years. If you are at a higher risk for colon cancer, talk with your PCP about being screened at an earlier age.
- [ ] **Diabetes screenings** — A screening with a fasting glucose is recommended for adults with high blood pressure or high cholesterol. Screening may be recommended for individuals with a family history of diabetes, those who are overweight or who have other risk factors for diabetes.
- [ ] **HIV counseling and testing** — If you engage in behaviors that may put you at increased risk, your physician may recommend HIV counseling and testing.
- [ ] **Weight check** — Your physician should record your weight at least every one to three years.
- [ ] **Tuberculosis skin test** — It may be advised if you are at high risk.

## Men

- [ ] **Prostate cancer** — If you are between ages 50 and 65, speak to your physician about the benefits and risks of prostate cancer screening. Your physician may suggest a digital rectal exam and prostate-specific antigen test.

## Women

- [ ] **Pap tests** — Recommended annually (with conventional Pap tests) or every two years (using liquid-based Pap tests) starting no later than age 21. At or after age 30, women who have had three normal test results in a row may get screened every two to three years.
- [ ] **Screening for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)** — If you are at high risk for STDs, you may benefit from periodic screenings for syphilis, gonorrhea and other STDs. Routine screenings for chlamydia are recommended for all sexually active women age 25 and younger.
- [ ] **Clinical breast exams** — Every three years from ages 20 to 40, and annually after age 40.
- [ ] **Mammography** — Starting at age 40, women should have mammograms every one to two years. Talk to your physician to determine your risk level and recommended frequency of screenings.

## Adults age 65 and older

- [ ] **Vision, hearing, gait and balance evaluations** — These regular screenings are essential. You should review with your doctor ways to reduce your risk of falling and injuring yourself.
- [ ] **Influenza and pneumococcal immunizations** — You should receive a flu shot annually and should be sure you have received a pneumococcal vaccination.
- [ ] **Osteoporosis screening** — Women should be screened regularly after age 65, but can start screenings at age 60 if at increased risk for fractures.
- [ ] **Pap test** — Women who are age 70 or older who have had three or more consecutive normal results, had no abnormal tests in the last 10 years or have had a complete hysterectomy may select to stop cervical cancer screening.

