

February Wellness Action Message

Quarterly Theme: Importance of Preventive Care

February Message: The Importance of Preventive Screenings



Take Action: Schedule Your Preventive Care Visits

Stay healthier with preventive care

Preventive care is what you do to stay healthy — like your annual checkup, cancer screenings, and immunizations. It can help you:

- Reduce your risk of developing other health conditions, including chronic diseases and severe illnesses from infectious diseases.
- Lower your health care costs — by staying healthier, your health care costs are reduced.
- Extend your life — with fewer health conditions, you're more likely to live longer and with better quality of life.

Schedule your annual preventive checkup with your primary care provider. During your visit, your provider will determine what tests or screenings are appropriate for you based on your age, gender, overall health, personal and family health history, and any chronic health concerns.

Breast cancer screening

Early detection increases the chance of successful treatment and opens the door for more treatment options. Breast self-exams are no longer recommended by most medical organizations due to ineffectiveness. However, it's important to be familiar with how your breasts typically look and feel, and to inform your doctor of any abnormalities.

Mammograms are the most effective method of early breast cancer detection for women and should begin between the ages of 40 - 50. For more information on early detection, visit the American Cancer Society [screening page](#).

Colon cancer screening

A colon cancer screening is typically a simple process. It's also an important part of preventive health care and a recommended screening for adults ages 45 - 75. Regular screenings can help find growths called polyps before they're cancerous. They can also spot cancer early when it may be easier to treat.

Colonoscopies are one common option. They only take about 30 minutes, and the results are good for up to 10 years (with a negative test for cancer). There are other screenings like a FIT (fecal immunochemical test), FOBT (fecal occult blood test), or a FIT-DNA (e.g., Cologuard®). You can do all of these from home; however, they need to be done more often. Your provider can answer your questions and let you know which screening is right for you. When you visit a network provider, your plan covers 100% of preventive services, including colon cancer screenings, at no additional cost to you.

Cervical cancer screening

The most important thing you can do to help prevent cervical cancer is to have regular screening tests. Symptoms of cervical cancer don't traditionally present themselves until the cancer has grown and spread to surrounding tissues. There are two screening tests:

- Pap test/smear: This test can help you prevent cancer in the first place or catch it early. A Pap test looks for abnormal or precancerous cells on the cervix that may cause cervical cancer if not treated.
- Human Papillomavirus (HPV) test: HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection that affects males and females. Infection with certain strains of HPV can cause cervical cancer when transmitted to women. The HPV test checks for high-risk strains of the HPV virus that can cause cervical cancer, and it can be done at the same time as a Pap test. Ask your doctor if you are eligible to receive the HPV vaccine. The HPV vaccine is available to men and women ages 9-26 and protects against HPV infection.

Talk with your primary care provider about screenings and the frequency that is right for you.

Medica's Resources

- Review the difference between preventive care vs. non-preventive care: [Preventive Care Overview](#)
- My Health Rewards – My Care Checklist. When you complete the Health Assessment, you will receive a personalized preventive care checklist based on your age, sex and health situations. Use it to stay on top of appointments, tests and immunizations. You will also receive 250 points for each preventive care completed.

