



Tune Up Your Health

TO KEEP OUR AUTOMOBILE RUNNING IN TOP CONDITION, WE PERFORM REGULAR MAINTENANCE ON IT. We have our oil changed every 3,000 miles; we rotate our tires and keep up with yearly safety inspections. But what about our bodies?

Few of us pay attention to the maintenance required for our health. There is a schedule, in fact, that we should follow to keep our bodies running in peak condition. Below is a suggested schedule of tests and immunizations to help you tune up your health!

YEARLY

It's important for all adults to receive a yearly wellness exam. Just as your car receives a yearly inspection, a wellness exam gives you and your physician the chance to protect your health and look for potential problems that could arise. During your wellness exam, your physician should check your height, weight, blood pressure and discuss with you any advance directives you may have, as well as health risks, such as tobacco or alcohol use and obesity.

Once a woman reaches age 18, or becomes sexually active, she should receive a yearly PAP test. A PAP test, or PAP smear, is a test used to detect cancerous cells in the cervix. If significant changes from the previous year are detected, they can be treated, thus preventing cervical cancer.

Women ages 40 and above should receive a clinical breast exam every year – more often if they are at risk for breast cancer. Once she reaches age 50, a woman should receive a mammogram every one to two years, as well. Breast cancer is the second most common type of cancer (except for skin cancer) and the fifth most common cause of cancer death. Early detection of breast cancer can greatly increase the chance of a positive outcome.

Prostate cancer tends to develop in men over the age of 50. Because the cancer is slow to grow and frequently symptom-free, a man could have prostate cancer and not even be aware of it. A yearly digital rectal exam (DRE) and PSA (prostate specific antigen) can help detect the disease.

Starting at age 50, all adults should have a yearly colorectal screening. If the patient is at risk for colorectal cancer, a colonoscopy may be recommended.

EVERY TWO TO THREE YEARS

High cholesterol can contribute to cardiovascular disease, such as coronary artery disease (heart attacks), stroke and peripheral arterial disease. A healthy cholesterol level is vital to your health and may be controlled with medication, diet or both. All adults should have their cholesterol checked every two years, more often if it is high.

When having your blood drawn for your cholesterol check, your doctor may order a diabetes screening as well. Recommended every three years for adults over 45, a diabetes screening can alert you to high blood sugar. Prolonged high sugar levels can lead to heart attack, stroke, neuropathy, poor wound healing, foot ulcers, eye problems and fungal infections.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Too often adults ignore immunizations thinking they're just for kids. But regular immunizations are strongly recommended for adults of all ages as well to protect against disease and maintain optimum health. Every ten years, adults should receive a diptheria-tetanus shot as benefits of the vaccine decrease with age without booster shots. Those 65 and older should protect themselves with a pneumonia vaccine. Lastly, influenza is an important immunization for all adults to receive yearly. Influenza remains a deadly virus, especially for the elderly, and can be prevented with regular, yearly immunizations.

Be sure to keep your engine in tune by following this recommended vaccine and check-up schedule!



**TAKE
CHARGE
OF YOUR
HEALTH**

CAPE FEAR VALLEY HEALTH