

## Be a Great Patient

**Find Dr. Right.** Choose a primary care physician whom you're comfortable with and have confidence in. Ask about the office hours, the doctor's treatment philosophy and who will care for you when your doctor is unavailable.

**Go prepared.** Even the best doctors are not mind readers so tell them everything about your health. Be honest about your personal and family medical history. If you are experiencing symptoms, tell your doctor everything about them. Report even small changes in your health; they may indicate an underlying problem.

**Ask questions.** Write down your questions beforehand. When your doctor tells you something you don't understand, ask questions. Start by repeating back in your own words what your doctor tells you. This will ensure that you understand what he or she said and will open up a dialogue if you didn't.

**Seek a second opinion.** If you are uncomfortable with a diagnosis or treatment plan, get a second opinion. And don't worry about offending your doctor. A good physician will want you to be comfortable with your diagnosis.

### BLOOD PRESSURE SCREENING

**Why:** There is no way to tell what your blood pressure levels are without a screening. If left untreated, high blood pressure can lead to heart disease and stroke.

**When:** Beginning at age 18, annually; more often, if high; every two years, if normal.

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Systolic:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Diastolic:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### CHOLESTEROL SCREENING

**Why:** Cholesterol is essentially plaque that builds up in your artery walls which can reduce blood flow to the heart. Abnormal cholesterol levels such as high LDL (bad) or low HDL (good) are a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke.

**When:** Beginning at age 20; at least every five years, if normal.

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**HDL:** \_\_\_\_\_ **LDL:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Triglycerides:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### FASTING BLOOD GLUCOSE TEST

**Why:** Blood glucose levels, also known as "blood sugar," naturally rise and fall after meals, but if they remain persistently high it means your body is not regulating glucose like it should which can lead to diabetes. If left untreated, high blood glucose can cause damage to your organs leading to serious complications and can increase the risk for heart disease and stroke.

**When:** Annually

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Glucose Level:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### BREAST SELF-EXAM

**Why:** No one knows your body like you do so it's important to check for any abnormalities in your breasts and report them to your doctor. If you are unsure about how to perform a breast self-exam, consult with your physician. The earlier breast cancer is detected, the better.

**When:** Beginning at age 20, monthly.

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Results:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### CLINICAL BREAST EXAM (CBE)

**Why:** Clinical Breast Exams are conducted by a medical professional in addition to mammograms to check women for any signs of breast cancer or other breast problems.

**When:** Beginning at age 20, every three years; annually after age 40.

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Results:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### MAMMOGRAM

**Why:** Mammograms are performed to screen healthy women for signs of breast cancer. It is also used to evaluate a woman who has symptoms of a breast disease, such as a lump, nipple discharge, breast pain, dimpling of the skin on the breast, or retraction of the nipple.

**When:** Baseline mammogram between ages 35-40; annually after that.

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Results:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### PAP SMEAR

**Why:** As part of a gynecological exam, a pap smear is one of the best tools to detect cervical cancer at its earliest stages. Like many cancers, treatment for cervical cancer is usually successful if found early.

**When:** Annually beginning at age 18 or as soon as sexually active. If a woman has had three years of sequential normal pap smears and is considered low risk for cervical cancer, she may discuss the option of extending her pap smears to every two to three years with her doctor.

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Results:** \_\_\_\_\_

### SKIN CANCER SCREENING

**Why:** Skin cancer usually starts out as a precancerous lesion—changes in the skin that are not cancer, but could become cancer over time. It's important to examine your skin on a regular basis to check for any abnormalities. However, a medical professional should perform a regular screening as well.

**When:** Perform a self-exam on a monthly basis; clinical screening every three years (adults age 20-39); annually after age 40.

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Results:** \_\_\_\_\_

### COLORECTAL CANCER SCREENING

**Why:** Like many cancers, colorectal cancer can be detected at an early stage making prevention and treatment much more successful. By undergoing a routine colonoscopy, benign growths in the colon known as polyps can be easily removed. If left inside the colon, these polyps have the potential to develop into cancer. In addition, an annual fecal occult blood test is recommended.

**When:** Colonoscopy—Beginning at age 50, every 10 years; more frequently if you have a family history. Fecal Occult Blood Test—beginning at age 50, annually.

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Results:** \_\_\_\_\_

### BONE DENSITY TEST

**Why:** A bone density test is one of the most accurate ways to assess your bone health and can help your health care provider confirm a diagnosis of osteoporosis. When repeated over time, it can be used to monitor your rate of bone loss detecting osteoporosis at its earliest stage, so treatment can begin sooner.

**When:** Recommended for postmenopausal women under age 65; all women after age 65; sooner if you are at increased risk.

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Results:** \_\_\_\_\_

### THYROID STIMULATING HORMONE

**Why:** TSH levels outside of the normal range can indicate a problem with the thyroid gland that needs further testing.

**When:** Beginning at age 35; every few years after that (based on your doctor's discretion).

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Results:** \_\_\_\_\_

Sometimes, the hardest part of finding the right doctor is knowing where to start. Baylor is ready to help. We have experienced physicians on staff at Baylor Health Care System hospitals, all with one focus in mind – You. So no matter where you live or work, Baylor can help you find the right physician, based on specialty, gender, or even language spoken. Simply visit **BaylorHealth.com** or call **1.800.4BAYLOR** anytime day or night.

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