Men’s Health Matters

After undergoing regular school and sports physicals through high school and college, many men stop seeing their doctor on a regular basis. Instead, a man’s health care becomes a hodgepodge of office visits, oftentimes to different doctors, whenever he gets sick or injured. A man can go for four to eight years without seeing a doctor or undergoing standard health screenings, such as blood pressure checks.

Irregular health care can put your health at risk. Here's why:

✦ If you only see a doctor, such as an Urgent Care or ER doctor, when you are sick or injured you don't develop a relationship with a physician who can get to know you, your family history and your personal health concerns.
✦ You won't undergo regular health tests and screenings and perhaps only receive them if a doctor thinks to recommend them during your visit.
✦ The doctor who orders your tests can't interpret your results fully if s/he doesn't have a baseline history of your previous test results. A change from a low normal to high normal blood pressure between regular office visits may indicate the beginning of a health problem.

The key to developing the baseline understanding of your overall health is scheduling regular checkups and screenings at the same time of year, every year. Scheduling physical exams in your birthday month is one option.

Another is to schedule your annual exam around Father's Day. Even if you aren't a father, you can honor your own father and the rest of your family by taking care of your health.

June Is Men's Health Month

Prayer: Gracious God, I thank you for all the men in my life. Grant them the wisdom and ability to care of their bodies, minds and souls in equal measure. Amen.

Recommended Health Screenings for Men

Recommended health screenings for men depend on age and individual health concerns. You can perform some of these screenings yourself, though others should be performed or ordered by your doctor.

All men over the age of 18 should:

✦ Schedule an annual physical and dental exam
✦ Undergo a vision/glaucoma test, a cholesterol screen and a blood pressure test (annually)
✦ Perform a monthly self-skin exam, examining the body for unusual moles or skin lesions
✦ Perform a monthly self-testicular exam

After the age of 35, men should undergo a thyroid panel every three years.

After age 45, a blood sugar test should be added to the list and taken every three years.

After 50, the following screenings are recommended:

✦ Prostate screening (annually)
✦ Fecal occult blood test (annually)
✦ Colonoscopy (every five to ten years)
✦ Hearing test (every three to five years)

Discuss other tests, such as electrocardiograms, with your doctor. In some cases, s/he may want you to undergo more frequent screenings. Also be sure to keep your doctor up to date regarding any changes and developments in your family medical history, as this can affect his/her recommendations.

- www.advocatehealth.com
- ahrq.gov/ppip/healthymen.htm
- cdc.gov/men/tips/exams.htm
- www.idph.state.il.us/menshealth/screening.htm
- nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/007465.htm
- minorityhealth.hhs.gov/templates/content.aspx?ID=3733