

# STAYING *healthy*

It's true what they say about an ounce of prevention. Below are some of the screening tests you should receive on a regular basis. Take this list to your next doctor visit.

## ROUTINE TESTS FOR ALL

- The Medical Exam:** You should review all medications with your doctor, even over-the-counter medicines. You should also discuss having a flu shot. If the flu vaccine is not available during your exam, make a follow-up visit to receive your shot. Your doctor should examine your feet if you are a diabetic, and order additional tests for your blood sugar. Your annual check-up is also the time to discuss any problems you are having. If you feel sad or lack energy, tell your doctor. Your emotional health is just as important as your physical health.
- Blood Pressure:** Your blood pressure should be checked during every visit to your doctor.
- Height:** A significant loss of height can indicate acceleration of osteoporosis.
- Weight:** Significant loss or gain of weight without trying can signify serious health problems such as heart, liver or kidney disease or could even indicate infection or cancer.
- Vision and hearing:** Have your vision and hearing checked if you or others notice changes in your reading, driving, or hearing.
- Blood Work:** Yearly blood work should include a *blood count* to screen for any bleeding, *glucose* to detect the onset of diabetes, *thyroid function* to screen for any thyroid disorder and *blood electrolytes* which can detect kidney problems and early heart problems.
- EKG:** It is recommended that a baseline EKG be done for both men and women. It should then be done at least every 2 - 3 years, or more often if necessary.
- Fecal Occult Blood Test:** This test should also be done yearly. Blood in the stool can be an early indication of colorectal cancer.
- Flexible Sigmoidoscopy/Colonoscopy:** The recommendation is that a sigmoidoscopy be done every 5 years.

## TESTS FOR MEN

- Prostate Exam:** Starting at age 50 men should have a digital exam of the prostate.
- PSA:** Prostate Specific Antigen is a blood test that can indicate prostate cancer. If the level is high, a biopsy of the prostate may be necessary.

## TESTS FOR WOMEN

- Mammogram:** It is recommended that this test be done at least every other year for women over the age of 50. During the annual well woman exam, your doctor should perform a clinical breast exam. Monthly self breast exams should also be done. If you don't know how, ask your doctor to teach you this technique.
- PAP Smear and Pelvic Exam:** This test should be done every three years, or yearly if you are at higher risk for cervical or vaginal cancer.
- Measurement of Bone Mass:** There is no standard for frequency of this exam. Women with a family history that puts them at higher risk of osteoporosis should have this test.