

# Male health after 50 years. What you should know.

In this article we will introduce you to the screening and vigilance you need to keep in mind to stay healthy after age 50.

## Get the screenings you need

### Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm.

If you are between the ages of 65 and 75 and have ever been a smoker, (smoked 100 or more cigarettes in your lifetime), talk to your health care team about being screened for abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA). An AAA may burst, which can cause dangerous bleeding and death.

**Colon Cancer.** If you are 75 or younger, get a screening test for colorectal cancer. Several different tests—for example, a stool test or a colonoscopy—can detect this cancer.

**Depression.** Your emotional health is as important as your physical health. Talk to your doctor or nurse about being screened for depression especially if during the last 2 weeks you have felt down, sad, hopeless or you have felt little interest or pleasure in doing things.

**Diabetes.** Get screened for

diabetes (high blood sugar) with a blood test if you have high blood pressure or take medication for high blood pressure. Diabetes can cause various problems.

**Hepatitis C Virus (HCV).** Get screened one time for HCV infection if: i) you were born between 1945 and 1965; ii) you have ever injected drugs or iii) you received a blood transfusion before 1992.

**High Blood Cholesterol.** Have your blood cholesterol checked regularly with a blood test. High blood cholesterol increases your chance of heart disease, stroke, and poor circulation.

**High Blood Pressure.** Have your blood pressure checked at least every 2 years. High blood pressure can cause strokes, heart attacks, kidney and eye problems, and heart failure.

**HIV.** If you are 65 or younger, get screened for HIV. If you are older than 65, ask your doctor or nurse if you should be screened.

**Lung Cancer.** Talk to your doctor or nurse about getting screened for lung cancer if you are between the ages of 55 and 80, have a 30 pack-year smoking history, and smoke now or have quit within the past 15 years. (Your pack-year history is the number of packs of cigarettes smoked per day times the number of years you have smoked.) Lung cancer can be detected with low-dose computed tomography (LCT).

**Overweight and Obesity.** The best way to learn if you are overweight or obese is to find your body mass index (BMI). A BMI between 18.5 and 25 indicates a normal weight. Persons with a BMI of 30 or higher may be obese. Overweight and obesity can lead to diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

### Get preventive medicines if you need them

**Aspirin.** Your doctor or nurse can help you decide whether taking



aspirin to prevent a heart attack is right for you.

**Vitamin D to Avoid Falls.** If you are 65 or older and have a history of falls, mobility problems, or other risks for falling, ask your doctor about taking a vitamin D supplement to help reduce your chances of falling. Exercise and physical therapy may also help.

**Immunizations.** i) Get a flu shot every year; ii) Get a shot for tetanus, diphtheria, and whooping cough; iii) Get a tetanus booster if it has been more than 10 years since your last shot; iv) If you are 60 or older, get a shot to prevent

shingles; v) If you are 65 or older, get a pneumonia shot; vi) Talk with your health care team about whether you need other vaccinations.

You know your body better than anyone else. Always tell your doctor or nurse about any changes in your health, including your vision and hearing. Ask them about being checked for any condition you are concerned about, not just the ones mentioned here. If you are wondering about diseases such as Alzheimer's disease or skin cancer, for example, ask about them.

**PROTECT YOURSELF**  
Prevention can save lives.



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