

HEALTH VIGILANCE

MEN'S HEALTH AFTER THE AGE OF 50 – WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

IN this article, we will introduce you to the screening and vigilance you need to keep in mind in order to remain healthy after the age of 50.

Undergo the necessary screenings

Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm – If you are between the ages of 65 and 75, are or were a smoker (smoked 100 or more cigarettes in your lifetime), talk to your doctor on being screened for Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA). If an AAA bursts, it can cause dangerous bleeding and death.

Colon Cancer – If you are 75 or younger, undergo a colorectal cancer screening exam. Several different tests are available, such as a stool test or a colonoscopy that will detect this type of cancer.

Depression – Your emotional health is as important as your physical health. Talk to your doctor or nurse about being screened for depression. If you have felt down, sad, hopeless or you have felt little interest or pleasure in daily activities for a period of two weeks or more, you should seek medical advice.

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

Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) – Get screened for the HCV 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 – Cholesterol levels should be checked regularly with a simple blood test. High cholesterol levels increase the risk of heart disease, stroke, and poor circulation.

High blood pressure – Have your blood pressure checked regularly. 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 a year smoking history, are a smoker or have stopped smoking 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 a low-dose computed tomography (CT Scan).

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 medication if you need it

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 falling risks, 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) Be vaccinated against the flu each year; ii) Be vaccinated against tetanus, diphtheria,

and whooping cough; iii) Get a tetanus booster if you were last vaccinated over 10 years; iv) If you are over 60 years of age, get shingles prevention vaccination; v) If you are 65 or older, get the pneumonia vaccination; vi) Seek advice from your doctor on other vaccinations you might need.

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 here. If you are wondering about diseases such as Alzheimer's disease or skin cancer, for example, ask about them.



Article supplied by the Hospital Particular do Algarve Group, with hospitals in Alvor and Gambelas (Faro)

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