

# Important Health Tests for Women

Schedule your lifesaving annual checkups. A clean bill of health will give you great peace of mind. And if something needs medical attention, the sooner it's detected, the better.

Try planning checkups around your birthday; they're easier to remember that way.

TEST	FREQUENCY	DATE
BLOOD GLUCOSE TEST (for diabetes)	45 & older: Every 3 years if test results are normal, or as directed by doctor	
BLOOD PRESSURE READING	Every 1-2 years or as directed by doctor; more frequently if over 140/90	
BONE DENSITY TEST (for osteoporosis)	Under 65: For postmenopausal women with risk factors—Baseline test, then as needed 65 and older: Baseline test, then as needed	
BREAST CANCER SCREENINGS*	40 & older: Mammogram and clinical breast exam (CBE) annually 20s & 30s: CBE about every 3 years Starting in 20s: Choose whether or how often to do breast-self exam (BSE)**	
CHOLESTEROL CHECK	Every 5 years or as directed by doctor	
COLORECTAL EXAMS*	50 & older: One of these schedules: 1. Fecal Occult Blood Test (FOBT) or Fecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) every year 2. Flexible Sigmoidoscopy every 5 years 3. FOBT or FIT every year and Flexible Sigmoidoscopy every 5 years† 4. Double-Contrast Barium Enema every 5 years 5. Colonoscopy every 10 years	
DENTAL CHECKUP	Every 6 months	
ENDOMETRIAL SCREENING*	35: Women with certain risk factors should discuss screening options with doctor	

TEST	FREQUENCY	DATE
EYE EXAM	20-39: Baseline exam and as needed 40-64: Every 2-4 years 65 & older: Every 1-2 years	
HEARING TEST	Test if hearing problem or loss is suspected or as directed by doctor	
PAP TEST*	Start about 3 years after beginning to have vaginal intercourse, but no later than age 21: Every 1-2 years based on Pap test used†	
PELVIC EXAM	Annually starting at age 18; earlier if sexually active before 18	
ROUTINE PHYSICAL (including cancer-related checkup)	Annually or as directed by doctor	
THYROID SCREENING	35 & older: Every 5 years or as directed by doctor	

In view of your health history, ask your doctor whether you need earlier or more frequent tests or screenings.

- \* Based on American Cancer Society recommendations
- \*\* Many experts recommend doing a monthly BSE. Consult your healthcare professional at the time of your CBE.
- † Of the first 3 options, the American Cancer Society prefers option 3.
- ‡ Beginning at age 30, if you have had 3 normal Pap tests in a row, your doctor may recommend screenings every 2-3 years. Another option for women over age 30 is to have a Pap test every 3 years plus the HPV test for human papillomavirus. Women 70 and older with 3 normal Pap tests in a row in the last 10 years may choose to stop screening.

## Breast Care Screening Guide

Finding breast cancer early is the best strategy for successful treatment. The following screening schedule for early detection of breast cancer is from the American Cancer Society (ACS).\*

### Age 40 and over

Mammogram and clinical breast exam yearly

### Age 20s and 30s

Clinical breast exam about every 3 years

### Starting in 20s

Choose whether or how often to do breast self-exam

### Mammogram

A mammogram is today's most effective way to detect breast cancer when lumps are too small to be felt or seen. It usually consists of two or more low-dose X-rays. Mammography is not painful, although it may feel slightly uncomfortable because the breast is compressed for a few moments.

### Clinical Breast Exam (CBE)

This is a breast exam by your healthcare professional. It gives you a good opportunity to ask any questions you want. If you choose to do breast self-exams, this is a good time to receive instruction. Have your CBE prior to a mammogram so any suspicious areas can be evaluated during the mammogram.

### Breast Self-Exam (BSE)

Checking your breasts by yourself is called a breast self-exam. The ACS recommends that starting in their 20s, women make a decision—with information from their healthcare professional—about whether or how often to do BSE. However, many experts recommend doing a BSE monthly to increase your awareness of how your breasts normally feel and look, so any changes can be quickly detected and reported.

\*Women at increased risk for breast cancer and older women with other health problems may be advised of other screening strategies by their healthcare professional.

## How To Do Your Breast Self-Exam

### 1. While Lying Down

LYING ON YOUR BACK IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO FEEL YOUR BREAST TISSUE.

Place a pillow under your right shoulder. Put your right arm behind your head. Use the finger pads of the middle three fingers on your left hand to examine your right breast (Fig. 1). Follow the pattern (up & down, circle, or wedge) and technique your healthcare professional



Fig. 1



UP & DOWN

CIRCLE

WEDGE

recommends at your clinical breast exam.\* Apply three levels of pressure in sequence (light, then medium, then firm) to feel all your breast tissue.

Check for lumps and thickenings. After examining your entire breast, lower your right arm slightly and use your left hand to check your right underarm. Switch the pillow to the left shoulder, put your left arm behind your head, and repeat steps with your right hand on your left breast and underarm.

### 2. While Looking In The Mirror

With hands firmly pressing down on hips, look for changes in the shape, size, or skin texture of your breasts (Fig. 2). Raise hands overhead and look for changes again, including dimpling, swelling, or redness. Check for changes in nipples, including unusual discharge.



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

### 3. While Standing In The Shower

Check your entire breast and underarm using the same method as in the lying down exam. Use right hand for left breast, left hand for right breast (Fig. 3).

Report any changes or irregularities to your healthcare professional at once.

\*The American Cancer Society recommends the up & down pattern.



## Protect Yourself From *Osteoporosis*

It's never too early to prevent osteoporosis or too late to begin treatment for this serious bone-loss disease. Osteoporosis, which primarily affects postmenopausal women, leads to 1.5 million fractures (broken bones) yearly. The complications from fractures kill as many women each year as breast cancer. It is well worth the effort to prevent osteoporosis.

- Get enough of the mineral calcium at every age: 9-18 years—1300 mg/day; 19-50 years—1000 mg/day; pregnant or nursing 14-18 years—1300 mg/day; pregnant or nursing 19-50 years—1000 mg/day; 51 and over—1200 mg/day.\*
- Vitamin D helps your body absorb and use calcium. Experts recommend a daily vitamin D intake of 200-600 I.U.\*
- Quit smoking and avoid excess alcohol. Both reduce bone mass.
- Get enough exercise.
  - Some of the best exercises are called weight-bearing exercises. These are exercises in which your feet and legs bear your weight. Dancing, walking, gardening, stair climbing, and playing racquet sports are good examples.
  - Resistance exercises are also very important for strong muscles and bones. Weight lifting—using free weights and/or weight machines—is an example of resistance exercise.
  - If you have not been physically active, it is especially important to consult your doctor before starting any exercise program.
- Discuss the effects of the medications you take with your doctor. Some medications increase your risk of osteoporosis.
- If you don't get enough calcium in your diet, ask your doctor about calcium supplements.
- If you are menopausal, consult your doctor about having a bone mineral density (BMD) test to diagnose bone thinning and osteoporosis. Experts recommend a BMD test for all women 65 years and older and for postmenopausal women under 65 with risk factors.

\* Source: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

## *Heart Disease Prevention*

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for American women. Some risk factors, such as family history and age, can't be changed. However, here are nine ways you can lower your risk for heart disease.

- **Have A Cardiac Disease Risk Assessment:** Consult your doctor about your personal risk for heart disease and stroke. Follow his or her advice for health tests, lifestyle changes, and therapies.
- **Don't Smoke:** Smoking more than doubles your risk for heart disease. Secondhand smoke is harmful, also.
- **Maintain A Healthy Weight:** Excess weight strains the heart. Control your weight with proper diet and exercise.
- **Control Cholesterol:** Limit foods high in cholesterol. Saturated fats and trans fats in your diet also raise cholesterol. Have your cholesterol checked on schedule and take medication if needed.
- **Control Blood Pressure:** High blood pressure raises your heart disease risk. Help control your blood pressure by exercising regularly, eating right, not smoking, limiting sodium and alcohol, and taking medication if needed.
- **Manage Diabetes:** People with diabetes are at increased risk for heart disease. If you have diabetes, follow your doctor's recommendations for keeping this disease under control.
- **Eat Right:** Choose a balanced diet, with an emphasis on fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- **Get Active:** Regular aerobic exercise, such as brisk walking, swimming, and biking, strengthens your heart. Moderate-intensity activities, including leisure walking, housework, and gardening, are also beneficial. Try for at least 30 minutes of physical activity most (preferably all) days of the week.
- **Manage Stress:** Stress increases your blood pressure and heart rate. Take time to relax. Exercise helps reduce stress, too.

## *10 Ways to Reduce Your Cancer Risk*

1. **EAT RIGHT.** Choose a variety of nutritious foods, primarily from plant sources. Include five or more servings of vegetables and fruit daily and choose whole grains rather than refined grains. Limit red meat consumption.
2. **MAINTAIN A HEALTHY WEIGHT.** Excess weight and obesity are associated with a higher risk for many diseases. These include cancers of the breast, uterus, colon, and rectum. Balance caloric intake with physical activity.
3. **STOP SMOKING.** Tobacco use accounts for most lung cancers and plays a role in the development of other cancers, including those of the cervix and bladder.
4. **AVOID SECONDHAND SMOKE.** Breathing secondhand smoke can cause lung cancer and other diseases, including heart disease, in nonsmokers.
5. **DRINK ONLY IN MODERATION.** Alcohol consumption is linked to many cancers, including those of the breast, mouth, throat, esophagus, and liver. Women who drink alcohol should have no more than one drink a day.
6. **BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE.** Engaging in at least 30 minutes a day of moderate physical activity can improve your overall health and reduce your risk for cancers of the breast, colon, and other sites.
7. **STAY SUN SAFE.** Use a sun block with an SPF of at least 15 year-round. Wear UV sunglasses, a wide-brimmed hat, and long-sleeved clothes. Avoid the sun from 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
8. **HAVE CANCER SCREENINGS AS RECOMMENDED.** See Important Health Tests in this Planner.
9. **TAKE CARE WITH X-RAYS & HAZARDOUS MATERIALS.** When having X-rays, ask for shields to protect other parts of your body. Follow proper directions when dealing with chemicals, metals, dust, and loose fibers.
10. **DECIDE CAREFULLY BEFORE STARTING OR CONTINUING HRT.** Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) increases the risk of breast cancer and other health problems. Discuss these issues with your doctor.

## 10 Tips to *Manage Weight*

Excess weight is a risk factor for many diseases, including heart disease, diabetes, and cancers of the breast, uterus, colon, rectum, and more. Learn how to reduce and manage your weight...then put your knowledge into action.

- 1 Check with your doctor to determine what your optimal weight range should be. Also check with your doctor before engaging in any exercise program.
- 2 Eat a well-balanced diet that helps you balance caloric intake with physical activity.
- 3 Drink six to eight (8 oz.) glasses of water daily. Drinking water before meals helps curb your appetite.
- 4 Keep a food diary of your eating pattern (where, what, when) so you can track your success at maintaining a healthy diet.
- 5 "Get physical" for at least 60-90 minutes on most days of the week if you want to lose weight, maintain a weight loss, or avoid gaining weight. Include weight-bearing exercises such as walking, dancing, or step aerobics to lower your risk of osteoporosis at the same time!
- 6 Do strength-training exercises using free weights or resistance machines on alternate days to increase muscle tone. This helps you burn calories more efficiently.
- 7 Learn to manage stress so you don't respond to it by overeating.
- 8 Unless weight gain is your goal, stop eating when you're no longer hungry rather than waiting until you feel full.
- 9 Practice portion control. Know how much you're really eating and adjust portion sizes based on your weight-management needs.
- 10 To keep motivated, plan nonfood rewards for improvements in your weight management.



# Enjoy the Benefits of *Low-Fat Snacks*

Healthy snacks can help to provide the nutrients you need each day and give you energy between meals. However, snacks that are too high in calories can lead to overweight, which contributes to heart disease, diabetes, and certain types of cancer. Foods with too much saturated or trans fat\* also are linked to heart disease. Nutritionists recommend a diet that gets 30% or less of its total calories from fat (a gram of fat has 9 calories). Saturated fat should make up no more than 7% of total calories.

<b>For example—If you take in</b>	<b>Limit total fat intake to</b>
1500 calories/day	50 grams
1800 calories/day	60 grams
2000 calories/day	67 grams
2500 calories/day	83 grams

The following chart can help you choose healthy snacks.

	Calories	Total Fat (g)	Saturated Fat (g)	Chol.** (mg)	Total Carbs (g)	Fiber (g)
<b>FRUITS</b>						
Apple, 1 medium	72	0.2	tr	0	19	3.3
Apricots, 3	50	0.4	tr	0	12	2.1
Banana, 1 medium	105	0.4	0.1	0	27	3.1
Cantaloupe pieces, 1 cup	62	0.5	0.1	0	15	1.4
Cherries, sweet, 1 cup	84	1.1	0.3	0	19	2.7
Cranberry juice cocktail, 8 oz.	144	0.3	tr	0	36	0.3
Grapes, 1/2 cup	55	0.1	tr	0	14	0.7
Kiwi, 1 large	56	0.5	tr	0	11	2.6
Melon balls, 1 cup	57	0.4	0.1	0	13	2.7
Nectarine, 1	60	0.4	tr	0	14	2.3
Orange, 1 medium	69	0.2	tr	0	18	3.1
Orange juice, fresh, 8 oz.	112	0.1	tr	0	26	0.5
Papaya, 1 cup	55	0.2	tr	0	14	2.5
Peach, 1 medium	38	0.2	tr	0	9	1.5
Pear, 1 medium	96	0.2	tr	0	26	5.1
Prunes, 1/4 cup	102	0.2	tr	0	27	3.0
Raisins, 1/4 cup	109	0.2	tr	0	29	1.4
Strawberries, sliced, 1 cup	53	0.5	tr	0	13	3.3

\*For trans fat, please check a food's nutrition label, as well as its list of ingredients. Any food that contains shortening or partially hydrogenated vegetable oil contains trans fat. Note that fresh fruits and vegetables have no trans fat.

## CALCIUM-RICH FOODS

	Calcium (mg)	Calories	Fat (g)
Yogurt, nonfat plain, 1 cup	488	137	0.4
Yogurt, low-fat plain, 1 cup	448	154	3.8
Cheese, part-skim ricotta, 1/2 cup	337	171	9.8
Fish, sardines, canned in oil, 3 oz.	325	177	9.7
Milk, skim, 8 oz.	301	86	0.4
Milk, reduced fat 2%, 8 oz.	285	122	4.8
Calcium-fortified orange juice, 8 oz.	390	110	0.0
Milk, whole, 8 oz.	276	146	7.9
Cheese, Swiss, low-fat, 1 oz.	269	50	1.4
Collard greens, cooked, 1 cup	266	49	0.7
Soybeans, green, boiled, 1 cup	261	254	11.5
Yogurt, low-fat, fruit-flavored, 1 cup	338	243	2.8
Tofu, firm, 1/2 cup	204	97	5.6
Turnip greens, cooked, 1 cup	197	29	0.3
Fish, salmon, pink, canned, 3 oz.	181	118	5.1
Kale, Scotch, cooked, 1 cup	172	36	0.5
Beans, navy, cooked, 1 cup	127	258	1.0
Cheese, cheddar, low-fat, 1 oz.	117	49	2.0
Cheese, cottage, low-fat, 1/2 cup	69	81	1.2
Broccoli, cooked, 1 cup	62	54	0.6

g = grams mg = milligrams

Source: USDA SR17-1 (2005)

	Calories	Total Fat (g)	Saturated Fat (g)	Chol.** (mg)	Total Carbs (g)	Fiber (g)
<b>VEGETABLES</b>						
Carrot, raw, 1	25	0.1	tr	0	6	1.8
Carrot juice, 8 oz.	94	0.4	0.1	0	22	1.9
Celery, raw, 1 cup	17	0.2	tr	0	3.6	1.9
Iceberg lettuce, 1 cup	7	0.1	tr	0	1	0.5
Tomato, 1	22	0.2	tr	0	5	1.5

	Calories	Total Fat (g)	Saturated Fat (g)	Chol.** (mg)	Total Carbs (g)	Fiber (g)
<b>GRAINS</b>						
Bagel, 1 plain, 3 inches	157	0.9	0.1	0	30	1.3
Brown rice cake, plain, 1	35	0.3	tr	0	7	0.4
Cracker, graham, 1 (2 1/2 inch sq.)	30	0.7	0.1	0	5	0.2
Cracker, wheat, 1 oz.	134	5.9	1.5	0	18	1.3
English muffin, 1	134	1.0	0.1	0	26	1.5
Granola bar, plain soft, 1	124	4.8	2.0	tr	19	1.3
Popcorn, air-popped, 1 cup	31	0.3	tr	0	6	1.2
Pretzel twists, 1 oz.	108	tr	0.0	0	22	0.8

	Calories	Total Fat (g)	Saturated Fat (g)	Chol.** (mg)	Total Carbs (g)	Fiber (g)
<b>DAIRY</b>						
Cheese, skim mozzarella, 1 oz.	72	4.5	2.9	18	tr	0.0
Chocolate milk, 1%, 8 oz.	158	2.5	1.5	7	26	1.3
Cottage cheese, low-fat, 4 oz.	81	1.2	0.7	5	3	0.0
Skim milk, 8 fl. oz.	86	0.4	0.3	5	12	0.0
Yogurt, fruit, low-fat, 1 cup	243	2.8	1.8	12	46	0.0

	Calories	Total Fat (g)	Saturated Fat (g)	Chol.** (mg)	Total Carbs (g)	Fiber (g)
<b>LOW-SODIUM SOUPS</b>						
Broth, chicken, 1 cup	38	1.4	0.4	0	tr	0.0
Chicken noodle, 1 cup	75	2.5	0.7	7	9	0.7
Vegetable w/beef broth, 1 cup	82	2.0	0.4	2	13	0.5

	Calories	Total Fat (g)	Saturated Fat (g)	Chol.** (mg)	Total Carbs (g)	Fiber (g)
<b>SWEETS</b>						
Angel food cake, 1 slice	72	0.2	tr	0	16	0.4
Cookie, gingersnap, 3	87	2.1	0.6	0	16	0.6
Cookie, van. wafer, low-fat, 7	125	4.3	1.1	14	21	0.5
Fruit juice bar, 3 oz.	75	0.1	0.0	0	19	0.0
Gum, 1 stick	10	tr	tr	0	3	0.0
Ice milk, light, 1/2 cup	92	3.0	2.0	9	15	0.0
Sherbet, orange, 1/2 cup	107	1.5	0.9	0	23	2.4

\*\* Cholesterol is a fat-like substance made by the body and found in certain foods. Too much cholesterol can lead to heart disease. Eating a diet low in cholesterol, saturated fat and trans fat helps you to control cholesterol.

g=gram m=milligram tr=trace amount