

CELEBRATE HEALTHY DADS WITH OUR “TOP 10” LIST

In addition to the celebration of Father’s Day, June has always been a month for dads and men in general – think barbeques, Bermuda shorts and dad in the yard trying to get that lawn just right. This month, let’s help the men in our lives take an annual inventory of their health.

Whether you’re a dad, a granddad or just a busy guy, here are the top 10 health checks every man should complete each year:

- 1- **Height, Weight and BMI.** Experts now believe that cardiac health is impacted by even small increases above your ideal weight. If your weight has increased more than 5 or 10 pounds since last year, it may be time to consider some lifestyle changes.
- 2- **Blood Pressure.** Blood pressure can fluctuate from day-to-day, so it’s important to use a reliable machine to check it regularly. If your blood pressure is over 140 (top number) or 90 (bottom number), you should schedule an appointment with your primary physician.
- 3- **Cholesterol.** There are several schools of thought on cholesterol, so any man with risk factors for heart disease (family history, diabetes, kidney disease) should talk at length with his doctor about individual goals.
- 4- **Prostate Screening.** Again, recommendations vary by patient and physician. In general, men age 50 or older should discuss the appropriate level of screening for prostate cancer with their doctor. African American men and those with a family history or prostate cancer should discuss screening at age 45.
- 5- **Immunizations.** You should get a flu shot every year and your physician may recommend other vaccinations if you have certain medical conditions. You should have a tetanus-diphtheria booster every year. You may also need a shingles vaccine once you over the age of 60.
- 6- **Blood Sugar and Diabetes.** Men should have a fasting blood glucose test at least every three years starting at age 45 – more often if they are overweight or have high blood pressure. Another key measurement of healthy blood glucose is an A1C test – talk to your doctor about whether it’s appropriate for you.
- 7- **Bone Density.** Men age 50 to 70 with risk factors such as long-term steroid, tobacco or alcohol use should be screened routinely for possible osteoporosis and overall bone health.
- 8- **Colonoscopy.** Screening for colon cancer for most men starts at age 50. If testing reveals no abnormalities, it will typically only need to be redone every 5 or 10 years. Men who suffer with various “gut issues” can be at higher risk, and may need to screen more aggressively to catch this deadly cancer early.
- 9- **Skin Checks.** Approximately 10,000 people each year die from melanoma, and two-thirds of those deaths are men. Add an annual skin check with a dermatologist or qualified practitioner to your health inventory.

10- **Dental and Eye Health.** Eye health and vision problems are often key indicators of other health problems, and dental problems can significantly impact the health of several vital organs. See your dentist for a deep cleaning at least once per year, and have your eye health and vision checked annually.

Because these tests are considered preventive, most of them will be covered by insurance plans at least once per year. However, there may be certain diagnostic or timing criteria you have to meet, so always check with your insurance company before making the necessary appointments.

From all of us at Woodland Heights Medical Center to all the dads and granddads in deep East Texas Happy Father's Day! Strong and healthy men are at the very center of a strong community, and we honor and celebrate you.

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