

# Women's health

Women need to be aware of certain conditions as they age. Your physician can recommend specific tests based on your personal and family medical history. Below is a list of tests and exams that women should speak with their physician about:

**Blood Pressure:** High blood pressure is 140/90 or higher. High blood pressure can cause serious health problems like strokes and heart attacks. Have your blood pressure checked at every doctor's visit or at least annually.

**Cholesterol and other lipids:** High cholesterol and other lipids (fats) can cause strokes and heart attacks. It is highly recommended that women age 46 and older have a fasting lipid lab test to screen for lipid disorders if they are at increased risk for coronary heart disease. Women ages 20-45 who are at increased risk for coronary heart disease should speak to their doctors about screening. Screening intervals will be determined by risk.

**Diabetes:** High blood sugar can cause problems with your heart, brain, eyes, feet, kidneys and nerves. Adults who are overweight or are at risk for developing high blood sugar should be screened annually.

**Immunizations:** Get a flu shot every year. If you are 65 years or older or have a chronic condition like diabetes, get a pneumonia shot. A tetanus booster is recommended every 10 years.

**Pap test:** Screening for cervical cancer depends on age and health history but, beginning at age

21, screenings should be done every two years. If normal, screenings should be done every three years after age 30.

**Colorectal cancer:** Have a screening test for colorectal cancer starting at age 50. If you have a family history of colorectal cancer, you may need to be screened earlier.

**Overweight or obesity:** Being overweight or obese can lead to diabetes and heart disease. The best way to learn if you are overweight or obese is to calculate your body mass index (BMI\*). If your BMI is 30 or higher, talk to your doctor about getting help with changing your behaviors to lose weight.

**Mammogram:** In addition to regular self exams, clinical breast exams performed by a health care provider and annual mammograms should begin at age 40 or as recommended by your physician. Some providers may request a baseline mammogram prior to age 40 based on health history.

**Osteoporosis screening (bone density):** Screening for osteoporosis should be done on all women 65 and older, as well as younger postmenopausal women with known risk factors and health history.

Talk to your physician about your particular risk factors and how often you should be screened for any condition you are concerned about. Please refer to your Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas contract for information about preventive care coverage.

For more information, visit [www.womenshealth.gov](http://www.womenshealth.gov).



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\*BMI = weight (lb.) x 703 divided by height (in.), then divided by height (in.) again

