A Guide to Preventive Care

It's simple. It's smart. It's covered.
What Is Preventive Care and Why Is It Important?

You may have heard the expression that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. It’s especially true when it comes to your health.

Preventive care means taking steps to protect your health even if you’re not sick. It involves screenings — exams to find signs of disease early. It also means regular checkups for you and your children even when you feel fine.

Why would you want to see a health care provider if you’re not sick? The answer is to keep you healthy. Preventive care can find problems early, when they’re easier to treat. It can also keep illnesses from starting altogether.

WellCare of Kentucky created this booklet especially for our members. It offers simple suggestions for you and your family. Many of the steps you can take involve visits to your primary care provider (PCP) for screenings or shots.

As always, we wish you good health. Please call us whenever you have questions about your coverage or when you need help setting an appointment with your PCP. You can reach us at 1-877-389-9457 (TTY/TDD 1-877-247-6272) Monday–Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Eastern.

WellCare of Kentucky also has a nurse who can answer your health care questions. When you are not sure of what kind of care you, or your child needs, please call the Nurse Advice Line at 1-800-919-8807 (TTY/TDD 1-877-247-6272). This line is available 24/7.
**PART 1: CHILDREN’S HEALTH**

We want your kids to grow up healthy too. With that in mind, we offer the following tips and reminders for getting your children the care they need.

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**When Should Your Child Get a Checkup?**

Here’s a schedule for well-child checkups and shots recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics/Bright Futures:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Well-Child Checkup Schedule/Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newborn up to 5 days</td>
<td>Well-child checkup*, Hearing Screening, Hepatitis B (HepB) shot, Newborn screening blood tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>Well-child checkup*, HepB shot (second dose between 1 and 2 months)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 months</td>
<td>Well-child checkup*, Shots: diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (DTaP); polio (IPV); pneumococcal (PCV); haemophilus influenzae Type B (Hib); rotavirus (RV)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 months</td>
<td>Well-child checkup*, Shots: DTaP; IPV; PCV; Hib; RV (depending on brand used); HepB, Blood lead risk assessment, Yearly flu shot if fall or winter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>Well-child checkup*, Shots: DTaP; IPV; PCV; Hib; RV (depending on brand used); HepB, Blood lead risk assessment, Yearly flu shot if fall or winter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 months</td>
<td>Well-child checkup*, Blood lead risk assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>Well-child checkup*, Shots (the following shots between 12 and 15 months): PCV; Hib; measles, mumps and rubella (MMR); Varicella (VZV chickenpox); Hepatitis A (HepA – 2 doses between 12 and 23 months), Dental visit (as recommended by your PCP), Blood lead test, Yearly flu shot (if not done at 6 months)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 months</td>
<td>Well-child checkup*, Shot: DTaP (between 15 and 18 months)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 months</td>
<td>Well-child checkup*, Shot: HepA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 months</td>
<td>Well-child checkup*, Blood lead test, Dental visit, Yearly flu shot during fall or winter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 months</td>
<td>Well-child checkup*, Vision and hearing screenings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>Well-child checkup*, Eye screening, Dental visit, Yearly flu shot</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<th>Age</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>Well-child checkup*, Dental visit, Shots: MMR; DTaP; IPV; VZV; Yearly flu shot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>Well-child checkup*, Dental visit, Eye screening and urine test (if needed), Catch up on all shots before kindergarten, Yearly flu shot</td>
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<tr>
<td>6–10 years</td>
<td>Well-child checkup*, Dental visit (once a year), Yearly flu shot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 years</td>
<td>Well-child checkup*, Dental visit, Shots: tetanus; diphtheria and pertussis (Tdap), meningococcal (MCV4), Yearly flu shot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 years</td>
<td>Well-child checkup*, Dental visit, Shots: Tdap; MCV4; human papillomavirus (HPV – earliest age 9 years); Yearly flu shot, Catch up on all shots needed before 7th grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 years</td>
<td>Well-adolescent checkup*, Dental visit, Yearly flu shot, Urine test (as recommended), HPV series (if not done previously). If sexually active yearly female pelvic exam, Pap smear and chlamydia screening.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14–15 years</td>
<td>Well-adolescent checkup*, Dental visit (once a year), Yearly flu shot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 years</td>
<td>Well-adolescent checkup*, Dental visit, Yearly flu shot, Booster MCV4, Tdap (as needed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 years</td>
<td>Well-adolescent checkup*, Dental visit, Yearly flu shot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18–20 years</td>
<td>Wellness Checkup*, Dental visit (once a year), Yearly flu shot, Yearly female pelvic exam, Pap smear and chlamydia screening (if sexually active)</td>
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</table>

At each checkup*, your child’s PCP may perform the following:

- Physical exam: Unclothed and covered
- Vital signs: Temperature, pulse, blood pressure, height, weight, body mass index (BMI)
- Health history, developmental and behavioral health assessment and a discussion about: depression, peer pressure, bullying and stress
- Sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing and protection
- Screenings/Tests: Vision, hearing, lead, urine
- Blood work: Hemoglobin or hematocrit, tuberculosis (Tb)
- Heart disease assessment or cholesterol screening
- Catch up on any shots that were previously missed
- Health Education and counseling: Injury/violence prevention, alcohol, tobacco, substance abuse, nutritional counseling and physical activity
- Referrals to specialists
Your Child’s Health Care Team:

You, your child and your child’s primary care provider (PCP).

It’s important for your child to have a PCP. They can get to know your child’s health needs and medical history. Your child’s PCP can:

• Help you get care for your child
• Provide care when your child is sick
• Keep track of your child’s medical services, such as immunizations (shots)
• Give you important information about your child’s growth
• Refer your child to a specialist when needed
• Coordinate your child’s health care needs

Your child’s PCP will also set up times for well-child visits. These regular checkups are important even when your kids are healthy.

Give kids’ health a shot in the arm

Shots — also called immunizations — can protect your child from serious illnesses. Your child’s PCP can make sure your child gets the shots he or she needs.

Keep track of when your child gets his or her shots. Ask their PCP or nurse to write the date of each one on a record card. Keep this record handy. You’ll need it for your child’s participation in day care, school, sports and other activities.
PART 2: WOMEN’S HEALTH

In this section, we focus on issues that may affect a woman’s health. They include screenings to keep you healthy and ways to take care of yourself while you’re pregnant.

Screenings for Breast Cancer

A mammogram is a special kind of X-ray for breasts. Mammograms are used to help find breast cancer early, when it’s easier to treat. Mammograms are recommended for women who are 40 years and older, even if they have no signs of breast cancer. They may also be recommended for younger women who have symptoms of breast cancer or who have a higher risk of getting breast cancer.

It’s also important to have a health care provider examine your breasts at least once a year and it’s important to examine your breasts once a month. You may find it’s easiest to do this at the same time each month, like when your menstrual period ends.

Screenings for Cervical Cancer

The cervix is the lower end of the uterus, which connects with the vagina. Cancer of the cervix develops slowly. It may have no symptoms at first, so many women may not know they have it. But regular Pap tests can help detect cervical cancer, and can help find abnormal cells so they can be treated before they become cancer. Pap tests can also find signs of cancer early so it can be easier to treat. If all sexually active females, or those with high risk factors, got Pap tests, many deaths from cervical cancer could be prevented.

Who should get a Pap test?

A Pap test is part of a routine pelvic exam. The health care provider takes a small sample of cells from the cervix for examination at a laboratory. Sexually active females (up to age 65) should get a Pap test every 1 to 3 years, or as recommended by their PCP. How often depends on your risk factors and past test results. If you have an abnormal test, it is important to get follow-up care.

Screenings for Chlamydia

Chlamydia is the most common sexually transmitted disease (STD) in the United States. People with the disease often don’t have any symptoms. Sexually active females, ages 15-19 have the highest rates of chlamydia. Sexually active females, or those with high-risk factors should get tested.

In addition, you should get tested if you:

- Have had an abnormal Pap smear
- Have had multiple sexual partners
- Have unprotected sex

Source: American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists; www.acog.org
Having a Healthy Pregnancy

If you’re trying to have a baby, it’s not too early to prepare for a safe pregnancy and a healthy baby. Get regular exercise, eat healthy, and avoid drugs, alcohol and other high-risk behaviors. You should also take care of any problems that might affect your health and your baby’s health, like diabetes or high blood pressure.

There are steps you can take to reduce the risk of birth defects and other problems. For example, you should take folic acid supplements to help prevent birth defects. Folic acid is a natural B vitamin. It helps your baby’s neural tubes develop properly. The neural tube is part of your baby’s brain and spinal cord. Taking enough folic acid while you are pregnant helps your baby’s neural tube close and may prevent birth defects.

When you think you are pregnant

Schedule your first prenatal visit the very moment you think that you may be pregnant. Most pregnant women have between 10 and 15 prenatal visits. Typically, a mom-to-be will visit her health care provider every four weeks during the first and second trimesters, once every two weeks until week 36 and then weekly until the baby is born.

Visit your health care provider between 21 and 56 days after delivery

Your body will go through several changes while you are pregnant. That’s why your health care provider will want to see you after you have your baby. It’s important to visit your health care provider between 21 and 56 days after you deliver your baby, even if you feel fine. This post-partum visit is important.

Also, it is best for your health and your babies’ health to wait at least 18 months between pregnancies.

Sources:
American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology.
March of Dimes at www.marchofdimes.com
Good Oral Health is Important During Your Pregnancy

You have a lot to think about during your pregnancy. Don’t forget about your oral health! Your oral health can be affected by the hormonal changes. Pregnancy may affect your teeth and gums. Your gums may become more sensitive, swollen and tender, and they may bleed more. Sometimes lumps appear along the gum line and between teeth. The swellings are harmless and they may bleed easily. Sometimes they are called pregnancy tumors but they are not cancerous. They usually go away on their own after the birth of your baby.

If left untreated, oral problems may cause problems during your pregnancy. They may affect the health of your unborn baby so it’s important to see your dentist at least yearly. You should continue to see your dentist during your pregnancy. You can get your dental screenings and get your teeth cleaned. Make sure to tell your dentist that you are pregnant. Be sure to let him or her know about any medications or supplements you are taking. Some medications are considered safe to take during pregnancy. Your dentist or PCP can talk with you about which medications are safe to take.

Talk to your dentist or PCP about any concerns you may have. Good daily care is important to good oral health. To help prevent cavities (tooth decay) and gum disease, brush your teeth thoroughly with fluoride toothpaste. Be sure to remember to floss! Your dentist can show you how to brush and floss to be sure you are doing it correctly.

Your oral health is an important part of your health. Be sure to include oral health in your daily self-care routine. Be sure to keep your dentist informed of all changes in your oral health.

Source:
American Dental Association at www.ada.org
Preventive care screenings are the tests your PCP does to check for common, but treatable conditions. This section outlines some of these conditions and what you can do to prevent them. It also describes the tests used to find them and, if something is found, what your PCP might do to treat it.

Part 3: Preventive Care Screenings

High Blood Pressure

High blood pressure often has no warning signs or symptoms. In fact, one in three adults has high blood pressure, and many people don’t even know they have it.

Because it has no warning signs, it’s important to have regular screenings. Your PCP can do these during your regular checkups.

Why should you keep your blood pressure under control? Having high blood pressure raises your chances of getting many health problems. It can increase your risk of heart disease and stroke.

What is normal blood pressure?

Normal blood pressure is 120/80 or lower. If your normal reading is higher than 120/80, you may have high blood pressure (sometimes called “hypertension”).

Source: www.cdc.gov/bloodpressure

How can I help keep my blood pressure normal?

• If you smoke, quit.
• Be active at least 30 minutes a day. Walking is a great way to be active.
• Eat less salt.
• Use less caffeine.
• Limit alcohol use.
• Eat at least five servings of fruit and vegetables every day.
• Stay at a healthy weight.
• Avoid stress.

Your PCP can talk to you about things you can do to help keep your blood pressure under control.
Glaucoma
Glaucoma is a disease of the eyes. It’s the second-leading cause of blindness in the United States.

It occurs when too much fluid in the eye presses against the optic nerve. This damages nerve fibers and can lead to blind spots. Eventually it can lead to total blindness.

Glaucoma comes on with little warning. That’s why it’s very important that people at high risk get an annual screening. Finding glaucoma early is the best way to control the disease.

Risk factors
Anyone can develop glaucoma. But there are some risk factors that may increase the chances of developing it. These include age, race, family history and medical history. Other risk factors include:
• Individuals with diabetes mellitus
• Individuals with high blood pressure
• Individuals with nearsightedness
• Individuals with prolonged steroid use

It’s very important for people in any of these groups to get regular screenings.

How is it treated?
Glaucoma can’t be cured, but it can be controlled. An eye care provider may prescribe medicine to reduce pressure on the eye or help with fluid drainage.

Sources:
• The Glaucoma Research Foundation; Some Statistics About Glaucoma
• The Foundation of the American Academy of Ophthalmology, 2007; Eye Care America, The Foundation of the American Academy of Ophthalmology
• National Institutes of Health, NIHSeniorHealth, nihseniorhealth.gov/glaucoma/treatment/01.html
Diabetes

Diabetes is a disease that occurs when someone’s blood sugar level is too high. Blood sugar, also called glucose, comes from the food you eat. Your body has a hormone called insulin that helps your cells use the blood sugar.

There are two different types of diabetes: Type 1 diabetes and Type 2 diabetes. Type 1 diabetes is usually diagnosed in children and young adults. In Type 1 diabetes, the body doesn’t make insulin. Type 2 diabetes is the most common form of diabetes. In Type 2 diabetes, the body doesn’t make enough insulin or use insulin well. Without insulin or without enough insulin, blood sugar stays in the body.

Diabetes is serious. It can damage the kidneys, lead to blindness and increase the risk of heart disease. Millions of people have diabetes, and many don’t even know they have it. That’s why it’s a good idea to have regular screenings.

The first step is to talk with your health care provider. They will ask you about your risk factors and may give you a screening.

For those people who already have diabetes, a health care provider will recommend treatment to get their blood sugar levels at a healthy level and keep them there. This may include:

- Taking medicines
- Eating a healthy diet
- Checking blood sugar levels often
- Getting regular exercise
- Going to your PCP for regular checkups and getting the following screenings to make sure the treatment is working:
  - Dilated eye exam
  - Blood tests including a test called “hemoglobin A1c” and another test for cholesterol levels
  - Urine tests to look for a protein called “albumin”

Sources:
Illinois Department of Public Health
Colorectal Cancer

Colorectal cancer occurs in the colon or rectum. The colon is the large intestine or large bowel. The rectum is the passageway that connects the colon to the anus.

Colorectal cancer is the second-leading cancer killer in the United States.

People at higher risk include those who have:
• Polyps — growths inside the colon and rectum that may become cancerous
• A diet that is high in fat
• A family history or personal history of colorectal cancer

People at high risk for colorectal cancer may need earlier or more frequent tests than other people. Talk to your PCP about when to begin screening and how often you should be tested.

Screening saves lives

If everyone aged 50 years or older had regular screening tests, at least 60 percent of deaths from this cancer could be avoided.

If you’re 50 or older, getting a colorectal cancer screening test could save your life. Screening tests can find polyps, so they can be removed before they turn into cancer. Screenings also can find colorectal cancer early. When it is found early, the easier it is to treat.

Source:

Every year, millions of Americans get the flu or pneumonia. You don’t have to be one of them. Vaccines given as a shot can help prevent these illnesses.

And they’re covered at no cost to you.

To get your shots, call your PCP, Customer Service or visit your local pharmacy.

Sources:


You can kick the tobacco habit

More than 430,000 Americans die each year from tobacco. Tobacco causes illnesses such as cancer, heart disease, stroke, problems with pregnancy and lung disease.

Steps to help you quit:

1. GET READY TO QUIT
Set a quit date. Then, change the things around you. Get rid of all cigarettes, chew and ashtrays in your home, car and at work. Don’t let people smoke or chew in your home. After you quit, don’t smoke or chew — not even a puff or a small dip!

2. GET MEDICINE TO HELP YOU QUIT
Talk to your WellCare PCP about medicine that can help you quit.

3. GET HELP
Tell your family, friends, and people you work with that you are going to quit. Talk to your PCP, nurse or other health care worker. They can help you quit. Get together with other people who are trying to quit, or call a hotline. Having the support of all these people can make quitting easier.

To find out where to get help in your area, call the American Cancer Society toll-free: 1-877-44U-QUIT.

If you slip, try again
Most people try several times before they quit for good. Quitting is hard, but you can do it!

Take care of yourself and go to your PCP if you:

• Have sores inside your cheek or gum line that won’t go away
• Notice any new cough or a change in cough (for example, you cough up more phlegm or mucus that usual)
• Cough up blood
• Wheeze or have trouble getting your breath, especially with exercise
• Develop chest pain
• Have a loss of appetite or unexplained weight loss
• Feel tired all the time (fatigue)
• Get frequent lung infections like pneumonia or bronchitis

Tips for staying tobacco free:

• Avoid alcohol or being around people that are chewing or smoking whenever possible.
• Eat healthy food and get exercise.
• Keep a positive attitude if you “slip up” and smoke or chew. Don’t give up. Set a new date to get back on track.
What is healthy weight loss?
Healthy weight loss isn’t just about a diet or program. It’s about changing your lifestyle. That includes changes in daily eating and exercise habits. To lose weight, you must use up more calories than you take in. You can reach a healthy weight by relying on healthy eating and getting regular exercise. You should try to get some physical activity most days of the week. Try exercising for about 60–90 minutes at an average pace. Start slow and increase the amount of exercise you get.

Defining overweight and obesity
Overweight and obesity refer to body weight that is greater than what is thought to be healthy.

For adults, overweight and obesity ranges are based on weight and height. They are used to calculate a number called the body mass index (BMI). BMI is used because, for most people, it is linked to their amount of body fat.

• An adult who has a BMI between 25 and 29.9 is considered overweight.
• An adult who has a BMI of 30 or higher is considered obese.

See the table on the right for an example.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Height</th>
<th>Weight Range</th>
<th>BMI</th>
<th>Considered</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5' 9&quot;</td>
<td>124 lbs. or less</td>
<td>Below 18.5</td>
<td>Underweight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>125 lbs. to 168 lbs.</td>
<td>18.5 to 24.9</td>
<td>Healthy weight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>169 lbs. to 202 lbs.</td>
<td>25.0 to 29.9</td>
<td>Overweight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>203 lbs. or more</td>
<td>30 or higher</td>
<td>Obese</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remember that BMI is tied to the amount of body fat. But BMI does not actually measure body fat. That means some people may have a BMI that says they are overweight, even though they do not have excess body fat. For more information about BMI, visit [www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/bmi/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/bmi/index.html)

Source: [www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/index.html)
Brush Up on Dental Care

Here are some general tips for brushing and flossing your teeth. See a dentist at least once a year to make sure you use a technique that is right for you.

**Brushing your teeth**

1. Begin with the right brush. Choose a brush with soft, rounded bristles. Be sure your brush is the right size (in general, smaller is better than larger).

2. Add the toothpaste. A pea-sized amount of toothpaste with fluoride is enough.

3. Brush in small circles. Gently jiggle the bristles or move them in small circles over the tooth and gums.

4. Get every surface. Brush the outside and the inside of each tooth. Use a light back-and-forth motion for chewing surfaces.

5. Don’t forget your tongue. Brushing your tongue will help freshen your breath and also remove germs.

6. Aim for twice a day. Be sure to brush after breakfast and before bedtime.

7. Take your time. Brushing should take at least three minutes.

8. Take it easy. Rough brushing leads to tooth and gum pain.

9. Know when to get a new brush. Replace your brush every two to three months, or when the bristles begin to spread or bend. You should also replace your toothbrush after you have been sick.

**Flossing your teeth**

Hold the floss tightly. Gently guide the floss between your teeth and scrape the side of the tooth with the floss. Repeat for all of your teeth at least once a day.

**Kids need dental care too**

Children should have a referral to a dentist by age 1, and a dental visit every six months to a year.

To take care of your smile, remember to:

- Brush your teeth twice a day, or after every meal when possible
- Floss your teeth at least once a day
- See your dentist regularly!

**Questions?**

Talk to your PCP or your dental provider. Or call Customer Service at 1-877-389-9457 (TTY/TDD 1-877-247-6272) Monday–Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Eastern.
Learn What You Can Do to Preserve Your Sight

Eye exams are an important part of health maintenance for everyone, especially if you have diabetes. You should see your eye care professional at least once a year for a painless dilated eye exam. Having your PCP look at your eyes is not enough. Have your eyes tested to keep your prescriptions current and to check for early signs of eye disease.

Eye exams for children can ensure normal vision development and help kids do well in school. Vision is closely linked to the learning process. Children who have trouble seeing or interpreting what they see may have trouble in school. Many times, children will not complain of vision problems simply because they don’t know what “normal” vision looks like. If your child performs poorly at school or exhibits a reading or learning disability, be sure to have his eyes examined by an eye care provider who specializes in children’s vision.

Remember regular checkups can give you peace of mind. If a problem is found, early treatment may help you prevent vision loss.

"Getting regular eye exams can prevent many leading causes of blindness."

Customer Service 1-877-389-9457 (TTY/TDD: 1-877-247-6272) Monday–Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Eastern.