

WOMEN'S HEALTH SCREENINGS

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BONE DENSITY SCREENING

Women over 65 should get a bone density test (DXA scan) for osteoporosis, according to the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force. Those under 65 at high risk should also be screened. Risk factors include early menopause, significant height loss, fragility fractures (like breaking a bone from coughing), and certain medications (e.g., long-term steroid use). Talk to your doctor to see if you need a test.

SKIN CANCER

According to the American Academy of Dermatology Association, it is estimated that melanoma will affect 1 in 41 women in their lifetime. Fortunately, early detection makes melanoma highly treatable. Start with a self-exam and ask a partner to check areas you can't see. Watch for moles that change, have irregular edges, or color. If anything looks suspicious, see your provider for a checkup.

CERVICAL CANCER

Screening guidelines for cervical cancer change by age. Ages 21-29 should have a pap test every 3 years. Screening for ages 30-65 is a pap test plus an HPV test every 5 years or a pap test alone every 3 years.

COLORECTAL CANCER

For those at average risk, screening for colorectal cancer should start at age 45. There are several options for screening. Colonoscopy should be done every 10 years. Flexible sigmoidoscopy is done every 5 years. FIT-DNA (Cologuard) is done every 3 years. Talk to your provider to find out which type of testing is best for you.

BREAST CANCER

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women, so regular screenings are key. Start mammograms at age 40 and continue every two years until 74. After that, you and your doctor can decide if you should continue with mammograms. Also, if you notice any changes in your breasts let your doctor know so the changes can be evaluated.

If you have a family history of any of these cancers, you are at higher risk. Talk to your provider to see what screenings you need.

SOURCES:

- <https://www.hrsa.gov/womens-guidelines>
- <https://www.aad.org/media/stats-skin-cancer>
- <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/screening/screening-tests>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/colorectal-cancer/screening/index.html>
- <https://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/recommendation/osteoporosis-screening>
- <https://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/recommendation/breast-cancer-screening>