



# Health Screenings for Everyone

Completing regular health screenings is one of the simplest ways to stay on top of your health. By detecting potential problems early, ideally before symptoms appear, you can reduce the likelihood of a minor health issue developing into something more serious.

Several screenings apply to most adults, regardless of gender, race, or health history. These screenings are designed to identify chronic illnesses and other health issues in their earliest stages when they are more treatable.

Getting established with a primary care provider is a good first step since annual wellness exams typically include health screenings. Your provider can help you determine if additional screenings are needed based on your unique health needs.

These nine health screenings are appropriate for most adults:

- **Blood Pressure:** High blood pressure often has no symptoms and can lead to a heart attack, stroke, or kidney damage. Check your blood pressure at least annually, or more frequently if you have certain health conditions or risk factors.
- **Cholesterol:** High cholesterol can develop quickly, raising your risk of cardiovascular disease. Have your cholesterol checked every 4 to 6 years, beginning at age 20.
- **Blood Sugar:** Early identification of prediabetes allows you to make lifestyle changes to prevent diabetes. Blood glucose should be screened starting at age 35 (or earlier if you have risk factors like obesity, gestational diabetes, or a family history of diabetes). If elevated glucose is not detected, screenings should be repeated every three years.
- **Colon Cancer:** Regular screenings can prevent colon cancer or identify it early in its most curable stage. Consult with your provider to determine if a stool-based screening or colonoscopy is the best choice for you. For most adults, screening begins at age 45.

- **Skin:** Regular self-exams are key to detecting skin cancer early. Monitor moles, freckles, or spots for any changes. If you notice anything unusual, see your provider. Perform monthly self-checks and schedule annual or more frequent dermatologist screenings.
- **Vision:** Annual vision exams can help identify vision concerns, many of which can easily be addressed with corrective lenses.
- **Dental:** Dental exams are typically performed once or twice a year and can help identify dental problems early, often preventing the need for costly procedures like fillings, extractions, and root canals.
- **Immunizations:** Vaccinations can reduce the risk of contracting infectious diseases. Talk with your doctor and stay up to date with recommended vaccines such as flu, Tdap, COVID-19, shingles, and pneumonia based on your age and health status.
- **Mental Health:** Depression and anxiety affect millions of adults. Brief screenings during annual exams can help you get support and treatment when you need it most.

Annual wellness exams save lives, yet many adults miss or skip these important visits. Many clinics, pharmacies, and community health centers offer free or low-cost screenings throughout the year. Your employer may also have workplace wellness programs that include screening events and preventive care. Major medical insurance plans typically cover the cost of certain preventive screenings, but check with your insurance provider to determine your plan's specific coverage details.

If you are overdue for any of these screenings, schedule an annual checkup and speak with your healthcare provider about which screenings are appropriate for your age, health history, and risk factors.



# Understanding Blood Test Results

Annual blood tests can help catch potential health problems before they progress. Routine screenings offer a snapshot of how your body is functioning, and they often detect changes before any symptoms appear. Blood tests are even more important as you age because the risk of conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and kidney disease tends to increase. Completing lab work as recommended by your provider also allows you to track important health trends over time.

Reference ranges for lab values can vary from one lab to another because laboratories set and confirm their own ranges and values. This is why test results should be interpreted using the specific range provided by the lab that performed the test. Labs determine these reference ranges (the lowest and highest values that are considered normal) by analyzing a large number of lab results from healthy individuals.

Your healthcare provider will recommend which tests are needed to monitor your health, but here are some common blood tests along with typical normal values for each:

**Comprehensive Metabolic Panel (CMP):** Measures electrolytes, blood glucose, liver enzymes, and kidney function.

- Glucose: 70–99 mg/dL
- Sodium: 135–145 mEq/L
- Potassium: 3.5–5.1 mEq/L
- ALT and AST: under 40 U/L

**Complete Blood Count (CBC):** Assesses red and white blood cells, hemoglobin, hematocrit, and platelets.

- Hemoglobin: 13.5–17.5 g/dL for men, 12.0–15.5 g/dL for women
- White blood cells: 4,500–11,000 cells/mcL

**Hemoglobin A1C:** Reflects average blood sugar over the past 2–3 months.

- Normal: below 5.7%

- Prediabetes: 5.7%–6.4%
- Diabetes: above 6.5%

**Estimated Glomerular Filtration Rate (eGFR):** Evaluates kidney function.

- Normal: 90 mL/min/1.73 m<sup>2</sup> or higher

**Lipid Panel:** Measures cholesterol levels.

- LDL: less than 100 mg/dL
- HDL: 60 mg/dL or higher
- Total cholesterol: less than 200 mg/dL

**Thyroid Stimulating Hormone (TSH):** Evaluates thyroid gland function.

- Normal: 0.4–4.0 mIU/L

These reference ranges may not apply to every individual, though, and some healthy people may fall outside of these established normal ranges. For this reason, it is essential to interpret lab values, along with other health indicators and guidance from your healthcare provider.

Routine lab tests, like blood work, are usually covered annually by insurance. Diagnostic tests, such as imaging, may have extra costs. Confirm coverage and frequency with your insurance provider.

Many tests should be repeated every year, or more frequently if you have existing conditions, but your healthcare provider can offer recommendations on the right frequency based on your personal health needs.



## Know Your Body

The early identification and treatment of health concerns is the most effective way to prevent chronic health conditions. Many serious illnesses begin with mild, subtle changes that can be easily overlooked. However, paying attention to your body's signals can help you address health concerns earlier. By recognizing changes early, you have a better chance of minimizing or preventing conditions from progressing, avoiding unnecessary medical treatments, and reducing the need for costly medications or hospital care.

Knowing when to seek medical care is a key part of preventive health. Certain signs and symptoms should prompt a visit to your healthcare provider, especially if they persist or worsen over time. Here are just a few:

- **Unexplained weight change:** An unintentional weight change of more than 5% in a month may indicate a health concern like thyroid disease, diabetes, or cancer.
- **Persistent fatigue or low energy:** Feeling unusually tired despite getting good sleep could be linked to anemia, depression, thyroid dysfunction, or heart disease.
- **Changes in vision or eye discomfort:** Blurry vision, floaters, eye pain, or difficulty seeing at night should be evaluated, as they could signal diabetes, glaucoma, retinal issues, or other eye disorders.
- **Shortness of breath or chest pain:** Feeling out of breath or heaviness in the chest area may be signs of cardiovascular disease or lung problems.
- **Digestive changes:** Ongoing bloating, constipation, diarrhea, or changes in bowel habits could point to gastrointestinal issues, food intolerances, or more serious disorders.
- **Frequent urination or excessive thirst:** These symptoms may signal high blood sugar, especially if accompanied by weight loss or fatigue.
- **Unusual pain or discomfort:** Chronic headaches, joint pain, or back pain could be early indicators of inflammation, nerve issues, or musculoskeletal conditions.
- **Skin changes:** New moles, skin discoloration, or wounds that do not heal may require further evaluation for skin cancer, diabetes, or infections.
- **Mood or cognitive changes:** Sudden memory problems, confusion, or mood swings may be signs of neurological or mental health issues.

Your body often sends subtle warning signs before a serious health issue develops. Acting quickly, even when symptoms may seem mild, can lead to earlier diagnosis and treatment. Stay connected to your body, recognize when something feels different, and trust your instincts. If something feels off, schedule a visit with your healthcare provider right away.

# HEALTHY EVERYDAY RAINBOW SALAD

By choosing foods from every color of the rainbow, you maximize the number of different micronutrients you're consuming. It's important to diversify what we're eating to make sure we're getting all the nutrients we need. Fruits and vegetables that are brightly colored are rich in antioxidants that protect us from damaging free radicals and thereby help prevent disease, among other things.

## Ingredients for Salad

- 1 big handful of fresh spinach
- 1 big handful of de-stemmed and finely chopped kale
- 1/4 cup raw grated beet, about 1 small beet
- 1/2 cup finely chopped red cabbage
- 1/2 cup raw grated carrot, about 1 small carrot
- 1/2 cup peeled, chopped and roasted acorn squash
- 1/2 cup finely chopped, steamed broccoli
- 1 tbsp raw sunflower seeds
- 1 tbsp pepitas
- 1/4 of an avocado, diced
- dried kelp flakes

## Ingredients for Miso Tahini Dressing

- 5 tbsp tahini
- 1 tbsp white miso paste
- 1 tbsp soy sauce, coconut aminos or gluten-free tamari
- 1 tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 2 tsp maple syrup
- 3 cloves garlic
- pinch of salt
- 4-6 tbsp water

## Instructions

1. To make the salad dressing, blend all ingredients until smooth. If desired, add more water to adjust consistency. Season with salt and pepper, if desired.
2. To assemble the salad, add everything to a bowl and top with the dressing.

**Servings:**  
1



## Nutrition Facts

Calories: 424  
Carbohydrates: 44g  
Protein: 13.5g  
Fat: 25g  
Fiber: 14g