

Checkups and screenings by age

Easy · About an hour a year, plus dental visits · Many screenings \$0 in network; adult dental often separate

YOU'LL NEED

- ☐ Your insurance card, or the name of a local health center
- ☐ A list of your medicines
- ☐ Your family health history, if you know it
- ☐ Your vaccine records, if you have them

WHAT TO KNOW

- 1 Go even when you feel fine.
- 2 Blood pressure: at least every 3 to 5 years from age 18, more often if you have diabetes, heart or kidney problems, obesity, a parent or sibling with high blood pressure, or borderline readings.
- 3 Cholesterol: starting at 20 and every 4 to 6 years if you have no risk factors, per the American Heart Association guidance MedlinePlus cites.
- 4 Diabetes: screening from age 35 if you're overweight or have obesity, repeated every 3 years, and earlier if you have other risk factors.
- 5 Infections: every adult 18 to 79 should get a one-time hepatitis C test, and everyone 15 to 65 a one-time HIV test, yearly if at higher risk.
- 6 Cervical cancer screening (if you have a cervix): start at 21, with a Pap test every 3 years from 21 to 29.
- 7 Eyes: an eye exam every 5 to 10 years before 40, every 2 years if you have vision problems, and every year if you wear contacts.
- 8 Teeth: see a dentist once or twice a year for an exam and cleaning.
- 9 Vaccines: get a flu shot every year and a tetanus booster (Td or Tdap) every 10 years.
- 10 COVID-19 vaccine: ask a doctor, nurse or pharmacist whether this season's shot is right for you.
- 11 Know what's free.

Watch out A free checkup can still produce a bill. If a new problem comes up during the visit and the provider evaluates or treats it, that part can be billed separately with a copay or deductible charge. Ask at the start: "Is everything today billed as preventive?"

DAD NOTE Book the checkup on your birthday month, every year. Easy to remember, hard to skip.

Full lesson: aptkeys.com/body/preventive-care/checkups-and-screenings-by-age/

Checked October 3, 2026. Sources: MedlinePlus (National Library of Medicine); HealthCare.gov; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Health Resources and Services Administration; KFF Health News.