

live well, work well

Health and wellness tips for your work, home, and life—
brought to you by the insurance and healthcare specialists at
Moreton & Company.

Women's Health: Preventive Screenings

Part Two

Mammograms

Early detection is an important factor in the success of treating breast cancer. Screenings can lead to finding and treating a lump in your breast one to three years before you would have felt or noticed it.

Both the American Cancer Society (ACS) and the National Cancer Institute (NCI) recommend that women start having mammogram screenings every one to two years starting at age 40. Regardless of age, high risk women should talk to their doctors about whether to have mammograms before age 40 and how often.

Pelvic Exams

A pelvic exam allows doctors to look for signs of illness within the organs inside a woman's body. The exam is used to look at a woman's uterus, cervix, fallopian tubes, ovaries, bladder, and rectum. Current guidelines recommend that women who are or who have been sexually active should have a pelvic exam every 1 to 3 years after having 3 consecutive normal exams.

Pap Smears

A Pap smear looks for changes in the cells within the cervix. These changes can predict cervical cancer or conditions that could eventually

develop into cancer. The ACS's recommendations for yearly Pap smears are: at age 18, three years after having sexual relations or at age 21 if you haven't been sexually active. After age 21, the ACS suggests the following screening schedule:

- Age 21 to 29 – at least every two years.
- Age 31 to 69 – every two to three years if you've had three normal tests in a row.
- Age 70 and older – you may stop having Pap tests if you've had three normal Pap tests in a row and for the last 10 years.

Cholesterol Screenings

Undesirable levels of cholesterol raise your risk of heart attack and stroke. Women aged 20 or older should have their cholesterol tested every 5 years, or more frequently if your doctor recommends it. A simple blood test will evaluate your total cholesterol, LDL cholesterol, HDL cholesterol, and triglycerides.

Colorectal Cancer Screening

Colorectal cancer screening tests detect cancerous cells and growths (polyps) that may become cancerous on the inside wall of your colon. Not everyone needs to be tested for colon cancer; your need for screening depends on your risk level. Three major factors influence your risk for colon cancer:

- You are age 50 or older.
- You have a family or personal history of colorectal cancer or adenomatous polyps.
- You have a personal history of inflammatory bowel disease.



Did you know...?

Preventive care, including regular doctor visits, is important for everyone. Women in particular should visit their doctors regularly in order to talk about their overall health, ask questions, establish a relationship with their doctor, and above all get the recommended preventive health screenings.