



# Men: Stay Healthy at 50+

Use this information to help you stay healthy at ages 50 and above. Learn which screening tests you need and when to get them, which medicines may prevent diseases, and daily steps you can take for good health.



## Get More Information on Good Health

Check out these Federal Government Web sites:

**Healthfinder.gov.** Guides and tools for healthy living, an encyclopedia of health-related topics, health news, and more. Go to: [www.healthfinder.gov](http://www.healthfinder.gov).

**MedlinePlus.** Health information from government agencies and health organizations, including a medical encyclopedia and health tools. Go to: [www.medlineplus.gov](http://www.medlineplus.gov).

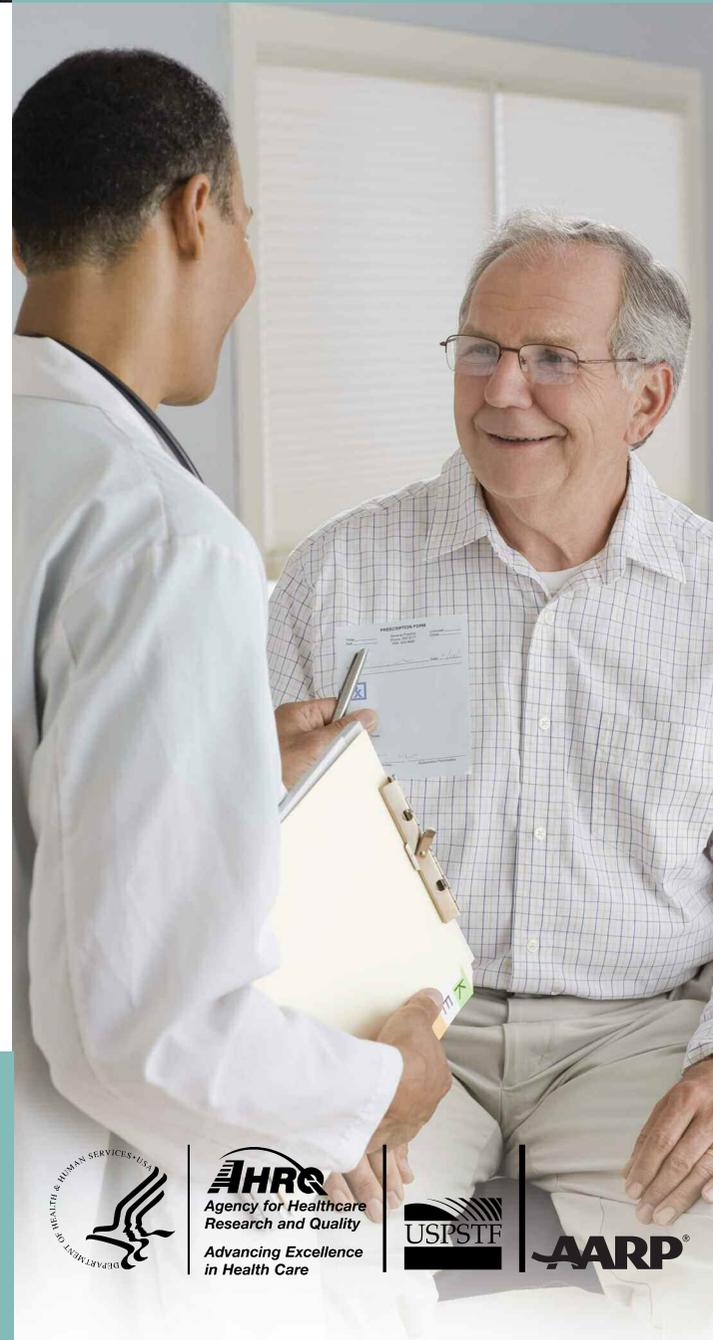
**Questions Are the Answer.** Information on how to get involved in your health care by asking questions, understanding your condition, and learning about your options. Go to: [www.ahrq.gov/questionsaretheanswer](http://www.ahrq.gov/questionsaretheanswer).

**Healthy Men.** An AHRQ Web site for men on staying healthy. Go to: [www.ahrq.gov/healthymen](http://www.ahrq.gov/healthymen).

If you don't have access to a computer, talk to your local librarian about health information in the library.

**Sources.** The information in this pamphlet is based on research from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF). The USPSTF, supported by AHRQ, is a national independent panel of medical experts that makes recommendations based on scientific evidence about which clinical preventive services should be included in primary medical care and for which populations.

For information about the USPSTF and its recommendations, go to [www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org](http://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org).



## Get the Screenings You Need

Screenings are tests that look for diseases before you have symptoms. Blood pressure checks and tests for high cholesterol are examples of screenings.

You can get some screenings, such as blood pressure readings, in your doctor's office. Others, such as a colonoscopy, a test for colorectal cancer, need special equipment, so you may need to go to a different office.

After a screening test, ask when you will see the results and who you should talk to about them.

**Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm.** If you are between the ages of 65 and 75 and have ever been a smoker (smoked 100 or more cigarettes in your lifetime), talk to your health care team about being screened for abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA). AAA is a bulging in your abdominal aorta, the largest artery in your body. An AAA may burst, which can cause dangerous bleeding and death.

An ultrasound, a painless procedure in which you lie on a table while a technician slides a wand-like medical device over your abdomen, will show whether an aneurysm is present.

**Colorectal Cancer.** Have a screening test for colorectal cancer. Several different tests—for example, a stool blood test and colonoscopy—can detect this cancer. Your health care team can help you decide which is best for you.

**Depression.** Your emotional health is as important as your physical health. Talk to your health care team about being screened for depression especially if during the last 2 weeks:

- You have felt down, sad, or hopeless.
- You have felt little interest or pleasure in doing things.

**Diabetes.** Get screened for diabetes if your blood pressure is higher than 135/80 or if you take medication for high blood pressure.

Diabetes (high blood sugar) can cause problems with your heart, brain, eyes, feet, kidneys, nerves, and other body parts.

**High Blood Pressure.** Have your blood pressure checked at least every 2 years. High blood pressure is 140/90 or higher. High blood pressure can cause strokes, heart attacks, kidney and eye problems, and heart failure.

**High Cholesterol.** High cholesterol increases your chance of heart disease, stroke, and poor circulation. Have your cholesterol checked regularly.

## It's Your Body!

You know your body better than anyone else. Always tell your health care team about any changes in your health, including your **vision** and **hearing**. Ask them about being checked for any condition you are concerned about, not just the ones here. If you are wondering about diseases such as **glaucoma**, **prostate cancer**, or **skin cancer**, for example, ask about them.

**HIV.** Talk with your health care team about HIV screening if any of these apply to you:

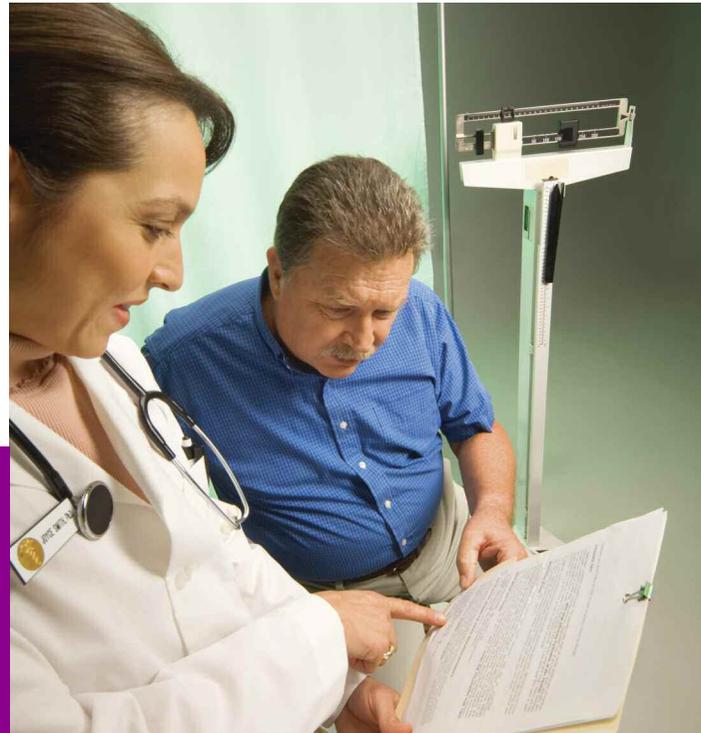
- You have had unprotected sex with multiple partners.
- You have had sex with men.
- You use or have used injection drugs.
- You exchange sex for money or drugs or have sex partners who do.
- You have or had a sex partner who is HIV-infected or injects drugs.
- You are being treated for a sexually transmitted disease.
- You had a blood transfusion between 1978 and 1985.
- You have any other concerns.

**Syphilis.** Ask your health care team whether you should be screened for syphilis, a sexually transmitted infection.

Syphilis can cause heart disease, brain damage, spinal cord damage, blindness, and death.

**Overweight and Obesity.** The best way to learn if you are overweight or obese is to find your body mass index (BMI). You can find your BMI by entering your height and weight into a BMI calculator, such as the one available at: [www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi](http://www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi).

A BMI between 18.5 and 25 indicates a normal weight. Persons with a BMI of 30 or higher may be obese. If you are obese, talk to your health care team about seeking intensive counseling and getting help with changing your behaviors to lose weight. Overweight and obesity can lead to diabetes and cardiovascular disease.



## Take Preventive Medicines If You Need Them

**Aspirin.** Your health care team can help you decide whether taking aspirin to prevent heart attack is right for you.

### Immunizations.

- Get a flu shot every year.
- Get shots for tetanus and whooping cough.
- If you are 60 or older, get a shot to prevent shingles.
- If you are 65 or older, get a pneumonia shot.
- Talk with your health care team about whether you need other vaccinations. You can also find which ones you need by going to: [www.immunize.org/catg.d/p4030.pdf](http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p4030.pdf).



## Take Steps to Good Health

**Be physically active and make healthy food choices.** Learn how at [www.healthfinder.gov/prevention](http://www.healthfinder.gov/prevention).

**Get to a healthy weight and stay there.** Balance the calories you take in from food and drink with the calories you burn off by your activities.

**Be tobacco free.** For tips on how to quit, go to [www.smokefree.gov](http://www.smokefree.gov). To talk to someone about how to quit, call the National Quitline: 1-800-QUITNOW (784-8669).

**If you drink alcohol, have no more than two drinks per day if you are 65 or younger.** If you are older than 65, have no more than one drink a day. A standard drink is one 12-ounce bottle of beer or wine cooler, one 5-ounce glass of wine, or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof distilled spirits.