

Health Screenings At Age 40 And Older: What You Need And When

(NAPSA)—Most diseases in their earliest, most treatable stages don't cause any symptoms or pain. That is why it's so important to check for disease with regular scheduled screening tests.

"Patients often think that if they feel O.K., then they don't need to see a doctor. But with many diseases, by the time you feel pain or have symptoms, it could be too late," said Peter S. Johnson, MD, FCAP, a pathologist at Broward General Medical Center in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. "There are better, safer, less painful ways than a heart attack to learn you have high cholesterol and blood pressure."

That is why the College of American Pathologists (CAP) recommends regular health screens. If you are 40 or older, talk to your doctor about these tests:

Cholesterol Testing

The CAP recommends that patients have their cholesterol checked every five years, starting at age 35. If you smoke, have diabetes, or if heart disease runs in your family, you should start at age 20.

Diabetes Testing

The CAP recommends all adults age 45 or older have a fasting glucose test. This test should be repeated every three years.

Mammograms

About 80 percent of breast cancers occur in women over age 50. The CAP recommends that women in their 40s or older have a screening mammogram on a regular basis, every one to two years or earlier based on family history.

Colon Cancer Screening

Colon cancer is the second leading cancer killer among adults. Your physician may recommend one or a combination of screening tests, depending on your risk factors and health history. Fecal occult blood tests plus flexible sig-



**Stay healthy:
Schedule regular screenings**



moidoscopy every five years are the preferred testing options.

Pap Testing

The risk of cervical cancer increases with age. Most invasive cervical cancers can be prevented if women have Pap tests and pelvic exams.

Prostate Cancer Screening

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in American men. More than 80 percent of prostate cancers occur in men 65 and older. A rectal exam and a blood test that measures for Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) are two screening methods.

"Remember, testing is only the first step," said Dr. Johnson. "Practicing healthy behaviors like good eating, regular exercise, and not smoking can really help minimize many of the physical limitations that accompany advancing age."

The College of American Pathologists provides a free Web site that reminds people to schedule annual health tests such as mammograms, colonoscopies and Pap tests. Visit MyHealthTestReminder.com to select the day on which you would like to be reminded to schedule a screening. On that date, you will receive an e-mail reminding you to call your doctor or health care provider to schedule an appointment.