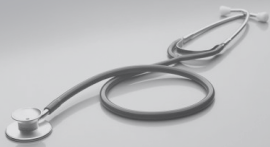


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BYU WELLNESS PROGRAM NEWSLETTER
Y'S CHOICES



WHY HAVE AN ANNUAL PHYSICAL?

By **Larry A. Tucker, Ph.D.**

You're healthy, right? You don't have any significant medical problems. So why have an annual physical? After all, annual physicals are expensive, time consuming, and inconvenient. Why spend the time and money?

The answer is, many serious diseases can now be detected in their infancy before any outward signs are identifiable. Furthermore, the vast majority of medical disorders can be corrected or cured, if they are detected in their early stages.



Following are a few examples of actual people I know personally who were fortunate to have their annual physical. (Names have been changed.) At 41, Darcie was energetic and feeling good. At her annual physical, she had no concerns or complaints. However, a simple blood test showed that Darcie had elevated calcium levels in her blood. Her doctor's diagnosis was correct—one of the four pea-sized parathyroid glands in her neck was enlarged and functioning abnormally. If left unchecked, the calcium in her bones would eventually be depleted and her bones would snap like pretzels. A surgeon removed the renegade parathyroid gland, her blood calcium levels stabilized, and after a decade, her health is great—calcium, bones, and all.

At 39, Lance thought he was in perfect health. He exercised and his weight couldn't have been better. During an annual physical, a blood test showed that Lance's TSH (thyroid stimulating hormone) level was elevated, signifying that his thyroid was seriously underactive. Most adults would have felt tired and gained weight with this condition, but not him. Because the thyroid gland is the "gas pedal" of the body, his doctor prescribed thyroid medication, which he still takes. Undetected, hypothyroidism would have eventually led to serious medical problems and extreme fatigue, but because it was caught early and promptly treated, he suffered no ill effects.

At 47, Glen was doing well. His business was thriving and he was enjoying life. He was surprised when his doctor told him during his annual physical that he had high blood pressure. Because blood pressure is labile, his doctor requested repeated blood pressure checks over the next several weeks. His blood pressure was consistently elevated. When his doctor recommended blood pressure medication he was hesitant because he felt fine. However, after learning that hypertension is the "silent killer," he initiated his blood pressure treatment. Now his blood pressure is low and his risk of heart disease and stroke are minimal.

Neither Darcie, Lance, nor Glen suspected they had a serious medical problem. However, in each case, an annual physical uncovered a significant disease. Because each disorder was detected early, there were no complications and treatments were simple and successful.

Without a doubt, annual physicals save lives, and active participation enhances the process. Ask questions. So you don't forget them, write down your questions and bring them to your appointment. If you want a particular test performed, ask for it. If your physician disagrees, find out why. When the assessments are completed, be sure to receive a copy of the findings, and, if necessary, have the results interpreted for you. A thorough understanding of your health risks empowers you to make lifestyle adjustments during the coming year that will improve your health.

Keep in mind, physicians are like mechanics, teachers, and lawyers. Some are better than others. If you're not pleased with the way your physical is handled, consider finding another physician. I once had a physician who listened to my heart, took my blood pressure, and looked into my ears, all in less than ten minutes. He called that my physical. I was disappointed, so I did a little research, found another physician, and I have been pleased with my annual physical ever since.

Why get an annual physical? Because many serious medical problems are invisible until it's too late. Get a jump on disease. An annual physical is a great investment in your health.

Screening Schedule

Recommended Screenings for Adults

Screening Tests	Ages 18-39	Ages 40-49	Ages 50-64	Ages 65+
Heart Health: Blood Pressure Test	At least every 2 yrs.	At least every 2 yrs.	At least every 2 yrs.	At least every 2 yrs.
Cholesterol Test	Start at age 20, discuss w/ Doctor	Discuss w/ Doctor	Discuss w/ Doctor	Discuss w/ Doctor
Diabetes: Blood Sugar Test	Discuss w/ Doctor	Start at age 45, then every 3 yrs.	Every 3 yrs.	Every 3 yrs.
Colon Health: Fecal Occult Blood Test			Yearly	Yearly
Flexible Sigmoidoscopy (w/ fecal occult blood test)			Every 5 yrs. (if not having a colonoscopy)	Every 5 yrs. (if not having a colonoscopy)
Double Contrast Barium Enema (DCBE)			Every 5-10 yrs. (if not having a colonoscopy or sigmoidoscopy)	Every 5-10 yrs. (if not having a colonoscopy or sigmoidoscopy)
Rectal Exam			Every 10 yrs.	Every 10 yrs.

Recommended Screenings Specific to Women

Screening Tests	Ages 18-39	Ages 40-49	Ages 50-64	Ages 65+
General Health Thyroid Test (TSH)	Start at age 35, then every 5 yrs.	Every 5 yrs.	Every 5 yrs.	Every 5 yrs.
Bone Health: Bone Mineral Density Test		Discuss w/ Doctor	Discuss w/ Doctor	At least once
Breast Health: Mammogram		Every 1-2 yrs., discuss w/ Doctor	Every 1-2 yrs., discuss w/ Doctor	Every 1-2 yrs., discuss w/ Doctor
Reproductive Health: Pap Test & Pelvic Exam	Every 1-3 yrs. if you have been sexually active or are older than 21	Every 1-3 yrs.	Every 1-3 yrs.	Every 1-3 yrs.

Recommended Screenings Specific to Men

Screening Tests	Ages 18-39	Ages 40-49	Ages 50-64	Ages 65+
Prostate Health: Digital Rectal Exam		Discuss w/ Doctor	Discuss w/ Doctor	Discuss w/ Doctor
Prostate-Specific Antigen (PSA) (blood test)		Discuss w/ Doctor	Discuss w/ Doctor	Discuss w/ Doctor

US Department of Health and Human Services

KEEP YOUR COLON HAPPY!!

American Cancer Society

Keep you colon happy by taking the necessary steps to prevent cancer. The number one most important thing that you can do to prevent colorectal cancer is regular colorectal screenings. You can also lower your risk of colorectal cancer by eating plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grain foods and limiting your intake of high-fat foods. Also participating in 45 minutes of moderate or vigorous activity on 5 or more days of the week can lower your risk for colorectal cancer even more. For more information about colorectal care visit www.cancer.org.



UPCOMING EVENTS

UNIVERSITY PERSONNEL WELLNESS PROGRAM

TOUR AMERICA: THE ULTIMATE WALKING CHALLENGE, *May 1 - August 25*

3K FUN WALK, *May 12*

HIKE THE Y CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION, *May 20*

EATING DISORDERS WELL & WISE, *May 10*

QUICK, FUN SUMMER MEALS WELL & WISE, *May 18*

TO REGISTER, OR FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT WELLNESS.BYU.EDU OR CALL 2-5884