

Healthy Aging: Physical Changes and Health Screening for Men

As men age, changes in their bodies is a fact of life. Understanding these changes, and how you can work with your healthcare provider to screen for possible health problems is key to maintaining your health.

“Some of the things that we check men out for as they hit 50 is number one cardiovascular disease: heart disease. Number two is we always check men for diabetes.”

If you are a man approaching the age of 50, make sure to schedule a yearly physical. Your healthcare provider will check your blood pressure, blood sugar levels and cholesterol to see if you have an increased risk of heart disease, diabetes or other health issues.

Screening tests for colon cancer are recommended beginning at age 45.

“The colonoscopy which is a way to look at the entire colon and in addition as they look at the colon if they find any abnormalities either a colon cancer that's early or a pre- cancerous lesion they can actually remove it during the procedure.”

If you have a family history of colon cancer, you may be advised to have colonoscopies more frequently.

“The other cancer that there are recommendations for screenings for is prostate cancer.”

General recommendations for prostate cancer screenings vary but your annual checkups can catch prostate cancer and other diseases at the early stages when they are more treatable, and a cure may be possible.

Your healthcare provider will also check your prostate to see if it is enlarged -a common concern as a man ages. This condition is called benign prostatic hyperplasia or BPH. The prostate grows during most of a man's life but doesn't generally cause problems until he reaches middle age.

“In terms of the enlarged prostate, diet and exercise can probably benefit from that as well as, treatment with medications if necessary.”

Surgery for BPH may also be an option to improve a man's quality of life.

“One of the most important things in men's health we've come to discover especially as men hit their 50s and beyond is a lot of guys have low levels of testosterone.”

In men, testosterone helps maintain everything from: bone density, muscle mass and strength, to sexual capability.

Testosterone levels peak during adolescence and early adulthood, and as men age the amount of active testosterone in the blood decreases.

Low testosterone levels have been shown to significantly impact a man's quality of life. The condition can cause increased irritability, depression, fatigue, inability to concentrate, reduced muscle mass and strength, decreased bone density and osteoporosis, increased body fat, low sex drive and erectile dysfunction.

“The cool thing is that for men who are diagnosed with low testosterone if we treat them a lot of these things, sometimes all of them will improve.”

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Between your annual exams regularly look over your skin. Report any suspicious spots or changes in the size or look of a mole to your healthcare provider.

As you age your body continues to change.

Regular physicals and screenings can help identify any health issues. Call your doctor and schedule your next appointment today.