

# Health Recommendations

## 2108 North Carolina Women's Health Report Card

Always consult with your doctor if you have a higher risk for any of the following conditions, or have concerns.

### RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON AGE

18-39      40-49      50-64      65+

#### ALCOHOL USE

Excessive alcohol consumption can have social and medical implications. Studies have shown that alcohol use during pregnancy can result in long-term complications for the child.<sup>^</sup>

A standard drink is equal to 14 grams (0.6 ounces) of pure alcohol. Moderate drinking for women is defined as having up to 1 drink per day. Heavy drinking for women is defined as 8 or more drinks a week. Binge drinking for women is defined as 4 or more drinks within about 2 hours. Women who may become pregnant or who are pregnant should not drink alcoholic beverages.<sup>^</sup>

#### BLOOD PRESSURE TEST

Having high blood pressure means the pressure of the blood in your blood vessels is higher than it should be. This common condition increases the risk for heart disease and stroke, two leading causes of death for Americans.<sup>^</sup>

Get tested at least every 2 years if you have normal blood pressure (lower than 120/80).

Get tested once a year if you have blood pressure between 120/80 and 139/89.

Discuss treatment with your doctor or nurse if you have blood pressure 140/90 or higher.\*

#### BONE MINERAL DENSITY TEST

Osteoporosis or “porous bone” is a disease of the skeletal system characterized by low bone mass and deterioration of bone tissue. Osteoporosis leads to an increased risk of bone fractures, typically in the wrist, hip, and spine.<sup>^</sup>

Discuss with your doctor or nurse if you are at risk of osteoporosis.\*

Get this test at least once. Talk to your doctor or nurse about repeat testing.\*

#### BREAST CANCER SCREENING

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among American women.<sup>^</sup>

Discuss with your doctor or nurse.\*

Starting at age 50, get screened every 2 years. Age 75 and older, ask your doctor or nurse if you need to be screened.\*

#### BREASTFEEDING GUIDELINES

Breastfeeding results in improved infant and maternal health outcomes.<sup>~</sup>

Infants should be breastfed exclusively up to 6 months. Appropriate foods may be introduced at 6 months and breastfeeding should be continued through 1 year or as mutually desired by mother and infant.<sup>~</sup>

\*WomensHealth.gov    ^CDC    ~American Academy of Pediatrics    #National Guidelines on Physical Activity    \*\*American Dental Association



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### CERVICAL CANCER SCREENING

The Pap test (or Pap smear) looks for precancers – cell changes on the cervix that might become cervical cancer if they are not treated appropriately. When cervical cancer is found early, it is highly treatable and associated with long survival and good quality of life.<sup>^</sup>

Get a Pap test every 3 years if you are 21 or older and have a cervix. If you are 30 or older, you can get a Pap test and HPV test together every 5 years.\*

Ask your doctor or nurse if you need to get a Pap test.\*

### CHLAMYDIA TEST

Chlamydia is the most commonly reported STI in the United States. Although it is easy to cure, chlamydia can make it difficult for a woman to get pregnant if left untreated.<sup>^</sup>

You need to get tested for chlamydia if, in the past year or since your last test, you: had a new sex partner; had your sex partner tell you they have chlamydia; traded sex for money or drugs; did not use condoms during sex and are in a relationship that is not monogamous; or if you have had any symptoms of chlamydia.\*

### CHOLESTEROL TEST

Excess cholesterol can build up within the arteries and lead to heart disease.<sup>^</sup>

Adults who do not have heart disease may need their cholesterol checked every 4 to 6 years. Adults who have heart disease should talk to their health care team about how often to have their cholesterol checked.<sup>^</sup>

### COLORECTAL CANCER SCREENING

Detects the presence of precancerous polyps – abnormal growths in the colon or rectum. Screening helps find colorectal cancer at an early stage, when treatment can often lead to a cure.<sup>^</sup>

Starting at age 50 through age 75, get screened for colorectal cancer. Talk to your doctor or nurse about which screening test is best for you and how often you need it if you are at increased risk.\*<sup>^</sup>

### DENTAL VISITS

Regular dental visits aide in the prevention and detection of tooth decay, oral cancers, and other diseases.<sup>^</sup>

Visit your dentist regularly, particularly if you are planning on getting pregnant or are pregnant.\*\*

### DIABETES SCREENING

Diabetes is a disease in which blood glucose levels are above normal. Diabetes can cause serious health complications including heart disease, blindness, kidney failure, and lower-extremity amputations.<sup>^</sup>

You should be tested for diabetes if you are between 40 and 70 years old and are overweight or obese. Your doctor may recommend testing earlier than age 40 if you also have other risk factors for diabetes: family health history; certain viral infections (coxsackie virus, rotavirus, mumps); BMI above 25; high blood pressure (140/90 or higher); high cholesterol (35 mg/dL or lower); lack of physical activity; polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS); personal history of heart disease or stroke.

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### EAT WELL

Eating healthy is a journey shaped by many factors, including our stage of life, situations, preferences, access to food, culture, traditions, and the personal decisions we make over time.

Visit [ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://ChooseMyPlate.gov) to learn about healthy eating habits, weight loss and maintenance, and more. Guidelines for pregnant or breastfeeding women are included.

### GONORRHEA TEST

Gonorrhea is a sexually transmitted infection which, if left untreated, can cause serious health problems, including problems getting pregnant.\*

Get tested for gonorrhea if in the past year or since your last test, you: had a new sex partner; had your sex partner tell you they have gonorrhea; traded sex for money or drugs; did not use condoms during sex and are in a relationship that is not monogamous; or have any symptoms of gonorrhea.\*

### HEALTH INSURANCE

The Affordable Care Act requires most U.S. citizens and legal residents to have health insurance. Speak to your employer, or visit [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov) to learn about Marketplace or Medicaid/CHIP coverage.

### HIV TEST

HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) is the virus that can lead to acquired immunodeficiency syndrome, or AIDS.^

Get tested for HIV at least once. Discuss your risk with your doctor or nurse because you may need more frequent tests. All pregnant women need to be tested for HIV.\*

Get tested for HIV at least once. Discuss your risk with your doctor or nurse because you may need more frequent tests.\*

### HPV VACCINE

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is the most common sexually transmitted infection in the United States. HPV can lead to health problems such as genital warts and cancer.^

All girls ages 11 or 12 years should get vaccinated. Catch-up vaccines are recommended for females through age 26 if they did not get vaccinated when they were younger.^

### INFLUENZA VACCINE

Influenza is a serious disease that can lead to hospitalization and sometimes even death. Every flu season is different, and influenza infection can affect people differently.^

Everyone over six months of age should be vaccinated each year. CDC does not recommend one flu vaccine over the other – the proper vaccine will be determined by your healthcare provider based on your age and health status.^

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**INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE**

Abuse is never acceptable. Visit [www.thehotline.org](http://www.thehotline.org), call 800-799-SAFE (7233), or speak to a trusted medical provider to learn more about getting help.

**PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

Adults who are physically active are healthier and less likely to develop many chronic diseases than adults who are inactive. They also have better fitness, including a healthier body size and composition.<sup>#</sup>

Perform 150 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic physical activity each week. Also do muscle-strengthening activities on at least 2 days each week. Currently inactive adults should work up to the recommended guidelines.<sup>#</sup>

Women 65 and older should remain physically active. Discuss a plan with your doctor or nurse.<sup>#</sup>

**PNEUMOCOCCAL VACCINE**

The major types of pneumococcal disease are pneumonia (lung infection), bacteremia (blood infection), and meningitis (infection of the covering of the brain and spinal cord). An estimated 5-7% of the population die from it each year.<sup>^</sup>

Discuss with your doctor or nurse to see if you are at a high risk of pneumococcal disease.<sup>^</sup>

All adults 65 and older should receive the vaccine.<sup>^</sup>

**SHINGLES VACCINE**

Shingles is a painful rash that usually develops on one side of the body, often the face or torso. For some people the pain can last for months or even years after the rash goes away. Risk increases with age.

All adults 60 years of age or older should get the shingles vaccine.<sup>^</sup>

**SYPHILIS TEST**

Syphilis is a sexually transmitted infection that can have very serious complications when left untreated.<sup>^</sup>

Get tested for syphilis if in the past year or since your last test, you: had a new sex partner; had your sex partner tell you they have syphilis; traded sex for money or drugs; did not use condoms during sex and are in a relationship that is not monogamous; or have any symptoms of syphilis.

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The 2018 NC Women's Health Report Card is available at:

[cwahr.unc.edu](http://cwahr.unc.edu)



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