

Are You Receiving Necessary Health Care?

Nearly 1 in 7 of us are not covered by any health insurance, according to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. And then there are those of us who just don't go to the doctor unless and until something doesn't work right anymore.

If we are not seeing a physician regularly for check-ups, we are not receiving important preventative health services, including tests to help uncover potential problems before they become serious!

Here are some of the tests that we should all have on a regular basis:

- **Blood Pressure Check.** High blood pressure can lead to heart disease, stroke and kidney disease. High blood pressure can be controlled through diet, exercise and medications to prevent more serious complications.
- **Cholesterol Check.** Cholesterol levels start to increase as we age and as we gain weight. If unchecked, high cholesterol can result in serious heart and cardiovascular disease. Diet changes, exercise, and weight loss are often prescribed. In some cases, medications may be necessary.
- **Blood Sugar Levels.** Diabetes is a terrible disease if unrecognized and untreated. It can lead to vision loss, kidney failure and poor extremity circulation resulting in amputation. 1 in 5 adults over the age of 65 has diabetes, and the odds are worse to get it if someone else in our family has it or if we are overweight.
- **Tests for Cancer.** Most breast cancers occur in women over the age of 50. All sexually active women are at risk for cervical cancer. Both older men and older women are more likely to get colon cancer. Prostate cancer is very common in men over the age of 50, especially in African-American men and those with a family history of the disease. Skin cancer is very curable when caught early. Oral cancers most often occur in persons over the age of 40, who have used tobacco or alcohol.

You may be feeling great but, if you haven't had these tests, or you aren't seeing a doctor regularly, the best thing to do is to make plans right now to get the health care you need!

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