



**PREVENTIVE HEALTH:
THE IMPORTANCE OF
ROUTINE SCREENINGS**





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INTRODUCTION

As we age, our bodies and our minds change. We develop aches and pains in places we've never had them before. We forget things that previously seemed unforgettable like our wedding anniversary or spouse's birthday.

For most older adults, aches, pains and memory loss are a daily part of getting older. And since we all know that mother nature and time are undefeated, all we can do is work at making getting older as easy as possible.

That is the focus of this health and wellness workshop. Today we will learn about the importance of taking preventive health measures through routine health screenings so you can lead a healthier and happier life.

WHY YOU NEED ROUTINE HEALTH SCREENINGS

Routine health screenings are an important aspect of preventive health care because they help detect potential health issues early, often before symptoms appear.

Many common diseases, like high blood pressure and diabetes, can develop without noticeable signs. By catching these conditions early, doctors can recommend treatments or lifestyle changes that can prevent serious complications down the road.

KEY TOPICS

- Why You Need Routine Health Screenings
- The Importance of Screening for...
 - Hypertension
 - High Cholesterol
 - Arthritis
 - Diabetes
 - Vision & Hearing
 - Breast Cancer
 - Prostate Cancer
 - Kidney Disease
 - Alzheimer's & Dementia
 - Depression
- The UnitedHealthcare App

Routine screenings also help establish a baseline of your health, which can make it easier for you and your doctor to track any changes over time. The following are some of the most important reasons why you need routine health screenings.

Early Detection of Health Issues: Many conditions, such as heart disease and cancer, can develop without obvious symptoms in the early stages. Regular screenings help detect these conditions before they become severe, improving the chances of successful treatment.

Preventive Care: Screenings can identify risk factors that may not yet cause symptoms but could lead to bigger health problems down the road. This allows for preventive measures to be taken, such as lifestyle changes or medications.

Managing Chronic Conditions: Many older adults live with chronic conditions like hypertension and arthritis. Routine screenings help monitor the progression of these conditions, allowing your doctors to adjust treatment plans to prevent complications.

Improved Quality of Life: Catching health issues early can prevent them from worsening, which means older adults can maintain their independence, mobility, and overall well-being for longer.

Cost-Effectiveness: Addressing health issues early often costs less than treating advanced stages of a disease, which can be expensive and require extensive treatment.

Mental Health: Regular health checks can also include screenings for depression or cognitive decline, helping to address mental health issues that might otherwise go unnoticed and affect your quality of life.

What screenings are most important for you will depend on your specific health history and risk factors. Ultimately, routine health screenings can save lives by improving the chances of catching issues when they're more treatable and manageable.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SCREENING FOR...

Not that we've discussed, in general, the importance of routine screenings for better health outcomes, let's look a little closer at the importance of screening for some of the most common health conditions affecting older adults.



HYPERTENSION

It's important for seniors to screen for hypertension because high blood pressure often develops silently and without noticeable symptoms. Here are the key reasons why regular screening for hypertension matters:

- Prevention of Heart Disease & Stroke- Hypertension is a leading cause of heart attacks and strokes. Early detection and management can reduce these risks.
- Reduced Risk of Kidney Damage- High blood pressure can strain the kidneys, potentially leading to kidney disease or failure.
- Better Quality of Life- Managing hypertension through lifestyle changes and medication helps seniors stay active, independent, and healthier for longer. Since hypertension can go unnoticed, regular screenings help ensure timely treatment and lifestyle adjustments, ultimately improving longevity and well-being.

HIGH CHOLESTEROL

Screening for high cholesterol is crucial for seniors because it helps prevent serious health issues like heart disease and stroke. As people age, their risk of developing high cholesterol increases due to factors like slower metabolism, dietary habits, and reduced physical activity. Regular screenings allow for early detection and management through lifestyle changes or medication, reducing the risk of heart attacks, strokes, and other cardiovascular diseases.

Since high cholesterol often has no symptoms, screening is the only way to address the issue before it leads to complications.

ARTHRITIS

It's important for seniors to screen for arthritis because early detection allows for timely intervention, which can slow disease progression and reduce joint damage.

Arthritis can lead to joint deformities and reduced mobility if left untreated and it can be linked to other health issues like osteoporosis or cardiovascular disease, making screening even more important.



DIABETES

It's important for seniors to screen for diabetes because aging increases the risk of developing type 2 diabetes, and early detection can prevent serious complications.

Undiagnosed or poorly managed diabetes can lead to severe health issues, including heart disease, kidney failure, nerve damage, and vision loss.

Diabetes can develop gradually without noticeable symptoms, leading to delayed diagnosis and complications, which is why seniors need to screen for diabetes.

VISION & HEARING

Vision and hearing problems can sometimes be early signs of other health conditions, like diabetes, high blood pressure, or neurological issues. Vision and hearing problems also increase the risk of falls or accidents, which can be very dangerous for seniors.

Some conditions, like macular degeneration, glaucoma, and age-related hearing loss, can worsen over time, that's why regular exams can help manage these conditions before they cause irreversible damage.



BREAST CANCER

Breast cancer screening is important for senior women because it helps detect cancer early when it is easier to treat and often more curable. Even though the risk of breast cancer increases with age, early detection through screening (like mammograms) can lead to better outcomes, including less aggressive treatments and higher survival rates. For older women 70 and above, the guidelines for screening can vary based on overall health, life expectancy, and personal preferences, but many health experts recommend continuing regular screening as long as the woman is in good health and has a reasonable life expectancy.

PROSTATE CANCER

Older men should consider screening for prostate cancer because it's a common cancer that can develop slowly over time, and early detection can lead to more effective treatment. As men age, the risk of developing prostate cancer increases, and screening can help identify potential issues before they become serious or symptomatic. Prostate cancer is detected through a blood test measuring the prostate-specific antigen (PSA) level or a digital rectal exam (DRE) that can detect problems earlier. Detecting it early can lead to a higher chance of successful treatment and better outcomes.



KIDNEY DISEASE

Screening for kidney disease is especially important for seniors because as people age, the risk for kidney problems increases. Here's why...

- As people get older, kidney function tends to decline naturally, even without disease. However, seniors are also more likely to have conditions that accelerate kidney problems, such as high blood pressure, diabetes, or heart disease.
- Many medications, especially those commonly prescribed to seniors (like painkillers, blood pressure meds, or diabetes drugs), can affect kidney function. Regular screening helps to monitor kidney health and adjust medications to avoid further damage.

ALZHEIMER’S & DEMENTIA

While there are no cures for Alzheimer’s and dementia, early intervention with medications and lifestyle changes can slow disease progression and manage symptoms more effectively.

Early diagnosis also allows individuals and families to make informed decisions about care, legal matters, finances, and living arrangements before cognitive decline becomes severe. Screening for Alzheimer’s and dementia is important for seniors because early detection can lead to better management and improved quality of life.

DEPRESSION

Screening for depression in seniors is crucial because it helps identify a condition that is often underdiagnosed and untreated in older adults. Here’s why it’s important:

- Depression in seniors can present differently than in younger adults, often showing up as fatigue, cognitive decline, or physical complaints rather than sadness. Screening helps catch these less obvious signs.
- Undiagnosed depression can lead to social withdrawal, loss of interest in activities, and a lower overall quality of life. Treatment can help restore enjoyment in daily life.
- Depression is linked to higher risks of chronic illnesses like heart disease, diabetes, and cognitive decline, as well as a weakened immune system.
- Depression is treatable with therapy, medication, lifestyle changes, and social support. Screening ensures that seniors receive the help they need. Regular depression screening is a simple but vital step in maintaining mental and physical well-being in older adults.

THE UNITEDHEALTHCARE APP

Through the UnitedHealthcare App, you can get instant access to the answers and support you need, and you LSU health plan details anytime, anywhere 24/7.

Find Care and Pricing

Search for network providers near you, see ratings and reviews, and estimate your out-of-pocket costs for different types of visits.

Refill Prescriptions

Conveniently request refills right from the app, look up drug prices and search for pharmacies near you.

Access Your Plan ID Cards

Easily view and show your UCard or your Member ID Card when you need them. You can also add your health plan details to your Apple Wallet or Google Wallet.

Check Your Benefits and Coverage

Find copay and coinsurance amounts, view plan spending and see how your plan covers different types of care and services.

View Your Claims

Check the status of new and past claims, see the amount you were billed, what your plan paid and how much you owe.

Scan the QR code to the right to get started or register for a member account at <https://www.uhc.com/sign-in> or call UnitedHealthcare Member Services at:



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Notes
