

Regular checkups help ensure good health for men

June 20 2011, By John Messmer

(Medical Xpress) -- Men, listen up: This is for you. What will it take to get you interested in your health? If you reply, "but I am interested," then you probably are already getting a regular checkup. But the rest of you should pay attention. There are lots of people who need you to be healthy: your wife or life partner, your children, your friends, perhaps even your employer.

You may think you don't need to see a doctor since you don't feel sick. Wrong! Just being a man puts you at risk for heart disease -- the number one killer of men in the United States. Cancer, the next most common cause of death, may be preventable in many cases, but not if you wait until it shows up. So you do need to see a doctor now, especially if you feel fine -- assuming you want to continue to feel fine.

Your body is kind of like your car -- if you don't do some preventive maintenance once in a while, it may fail you suddenly and repairs will be costly. If you are the only breadwinner in the house, you particularly need to be checked. But even if two of you work, could your family function with the loss of your income?

If you do not already see your doctor regularly, schedule a health maintenance check up. That's what we call a physical, now. For men in their 20s and 30s, a cholesterol check, blood pressure, blood sugar and updated immunizations will be part of the visit. Forty-something men should have the same tests and perhaps a test for prostate or colon cancer, depending on their family history and racial background. In the

50s and beyond, colon cancer screening is part of everyone's exam, and prostate health may be added to the screening menu.

In addition to screening for disease, your physician can help you prevent problems by updating immunizations, counseling regarding smoking, exercise, diet and preventive medications, such as aspirin, for men at higher risk for heart disease.

Think about it, [men](#), and if you decide not to get a checkup, ask someone important in your life for their opinion. My guess is they will want you to be sure you are in the best [health](#) possible.

Provided by Pennsylvania State University

Citation: Regular checkups help ensure good health for men (2011, June 20) retrieved 1 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2011-06-regular-checkups-good-health-men.html>

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