

Wellness visits for better well-being

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(HealthDay)—If you want to stay on top of your health, no matter what your age, it's important to see your doctor for a regular wellness visit—typically a yearly check-up that takes a head-to-toe look at you as

a whole person.

A [wellness](#) visit is designed to improve your health and prevent diseases or uncover them as soon as possible, when they're easier to treat, according to the U.S. National Institutes of Health. Problems like [high cholesterol](#) and [high blood pressure](#) don't typically have early symptoms or warning signs, but your doctor can uncover them with simple office tests.

A wellness visit might include screenings, blood tests and vaccinations. What exactly you'll need depends on factors like your gender, age, current health status and family history.

Your doctor will also take into account your lifestyle choices such as the types of food you eat, how often you exercise, and if you smoke. Additional screenings may be scheduled if you have an ongoing problem, like a chronic [disease](#), and they may be handled at a separate appointment.

To best prepare for your checkup, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggests that you first review health information about yourself and your close relatives. Write down any new conditions experienced by family members since your last doctor visit. Plan on going over them with your [health care provider](#), who will then be better able to assess your risks.

Next, write down your questions and concerns, anything from a questionable mole on your shoulder to stress that keeps you up at night.

This appointment is also a great time to address any specific issues you have, such as getting advice for losing weight or starting an exercise program.

These steps will help you get the most out of your wellness visit and set health goals for the coming year.

More information: The CDC has a [check-up checklist](#) detailing all the steps to take before your next wellness visit.

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