

Wellness Newsletter

Monitor Your Health: Get Regular Check-ups

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Many employees periodically receive required work-related physical exams and diagnostic tests as part of medical surveillance programs.

To monitor your overall health status, it's also important for everyone – regardless of the type of work they do – to get an annual, voluntary wellness checkup.

A routine visit to your personal medical provider offers reassurance that you're healthy. If a medical condition is detected, you can get the assistance you need – whether the remedy involves medication, a surgical procedure or certain lifestyle changes. You can also obtain vaccinations that help prevent illness and the spread of disease.

During your checkup, a medical professional will review your health history and check vital signs, including weight, heart rate and blood pressure. The physical exam will cover all body systems and functions. Samples of your urine and blood may be tested by a lab.



In addition to a wellness checkup, medical professionals recommend:

- Periodic visits to a dentist and dental hygienist to maintain good oral health. Untreated dental problems are associated with serious illness.
- Eye exams based on your age, the presence of any vision-related complaints or chronic illness that could affect your sight, and genetic factors.
- Specialized screening exams for various types of cancer based on your gender and age. This may include skin, breast, cervical, colon or prostate screenings.

Mind-Body Connection

Your physical and mental health are closely connected. Many people experience physical symptoms as a result of treatable mental health conditions that are either not detected or disregarded for a variety of reasons. If you find yourself drinking alcohol or taking drugs to relieve stress or suppress mental or physical pain, or you have symptoms of depression for more than two weeks, get a professional assessment.

Common signs and symptoms of depression include:

- Persistent sad, anxious or empty mood
- Problems with sleeping
- Fluctuations in appetite and weight
- Nervousness, restlessness or irritability
- Feeling guilty, worthless or helpless
- Loss of interest in sex, hobbies and other activities
- Low energy or extreme fatigue
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Body aches/pains, headaches, stomach upset

Get immediate assistance if you have suicidal thoughts.



Wellness Tips

Stress

There are many ways to reduce your stress level. It may be as simple as pausing to take some deep breaths, walking outdoors or listening to upbeat music. Many people find that meditation practice has a calming effect. Other recommended stress-reducers include yoga, aerobic exercise, spending time with family and friends, and pursuing a hobby or other activity you enjoy.

Sleep

Although fatigue is often a factor in accidents, injuries and the onset of illness, millions of Americans don't get adequate rest. Seven to eight hours of sleep per day in a cool, quiet, dark room are recommended. Follow these simple rules: 1) Stick to a consistent sleep schedule, even on your days off. 2) Avoid stimulants such as caffeine, tobacco and electronic devices. 3) Don't eat a heavy meal before bedtime.

Fuel

A sense of well-being is directly associated with what you eat. Fresh fruits and vegetables reduce your risk of heart disease, stroke, cancer, and eye and digestive problems. Whole grains and legumes, limited amounts of fish, poultry, dairy and lean red meat are also recommended as part of a balanced diet.

Exercise

Regular exercise helps people control their weight, build endurance and flexibility, avoid injuries and illnesses, and feel more energetic and happy. According to U.S. Physical Activity Guidelines, adults should get:

- At least 2½ hours of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise a week. Walking at a brisk pace, mowing the lawn, dancing or playing tennis are examples of moderate exercise.
- Get at least 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic exercise a week. For example, go for a run, swim laps or ride a bike.

If you do not meet these guidelines, develop a fitness plan with your personal care provider.

Skin

To help prevent sunburn and skin cancer, consistently protect yourself with clothing and apply broad-spectrum sunscreen to skin and lips, even on cloudy days. Wear glasses or goggles to block UV rays that can damage your eyes and eyelids.

Smoking

Cigarette smoking is a leading cause of cancer and related deaths. If you smoke cigarettes, get support and develop a plan to quit. Ask your employer about smoking cessation programs or contact the [American Cancer Society](#).

For more information about personal wellness:

- Consult with onsite medical staff, your personal provider, insurer or health plan representative
- Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [family checkup website](#)
- Ask your employer about employee assistance and other confidential counseling programs