

R. Scott Gorman, M.D., medical director of Mayo Medallion Program, discusses the importance of preventative screenings for men's health and wellness.



Today, overall health and wellness for men means more than just screening for prostate cancer. Men's health screenings should encompass cardiovascular risks, cancer, nutrition, obesity and much more.

Cardiovascular Health

Despite its high incidence, most cardiovascular disease is preventable. All patients, especially men, need to realize that one of the most important parts of a health screening/ wellness exam is to recognize those risk factors that contribute to cardiovascular disease. These risk factors include smoking, obesity, diabetes, physical inactivity, high cholesterol and triglycerides, hypertension and stress. Counseling, lifestyle changes and medication can all decrease the risk of cardiovascular disease.

Cancer

Lung cancer is still heavily linked to smoking and smoke exposure although it can occur without such exposure. Stopping smoking can markedly reduce the risk of lung cancer development over time. Some recent studies suggest that CT scanning of the lungs in high-risk individuals may detect the disease at an earlier and more curable time.

Prostate cancer, the most common cancer in American men, affects one in six men over their lifetime. Risk factors for prostate cancer include advancing age, family history, a high-fat diet, ethnicity and obesity. The American Cancer Society recommends an annual PSA blood test and an annual rectal exam in those with a life expectancy of at least 10 years.

Colorectal cancer is another significant source of cancer deaths in men. The disease has a high mortality if not detected early, but is very preventable if patients follow the recommended guidelines for colonoscopy. Screening with colonoscopy should begin at the age of 50 for most people, but at an earlier age in some individuals with a strong family history. The frequency of colonoscopy should be every 10 years, but this should be more frequent in those with a family history or a history of polyps.

Other Screenings

A screening and wellness exam is a good time to review other health risks including safety, nutrition and stress-related issues. Immunizations should be updated, including shingles vaccine, for those who are 50 years old or older.

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Mayo Clinic Medallion Program

480.614.6030, www.mayoclinic.org/medallion-program