

# HEALTHY AT 50+

FIND 10 SIMPLE HEALTH TESTS AND  
PREVENTIVE CARE STEPS THAT ARE VITAL  
TO YOUR OVERALL WELL-BEING.

MAINTAINING YOUR HEALTH as you age is all about being proactive. Getting key screenings and vaccines is one of the smartest moves you can make, says **Alicia Arbaje, M.D., M.P.H.**, director of transitional care research at Johns Hopkins Bayview Center on Aging and Health. While your health care provider can help you determine the exact preventive care steps that are right for you\*, here are 10 health moves Arbaje recommends for most individuals once they reach the age of 50.



## COLON CANCER SCREENING

Regular colorectal screenings can help find cancer when it's small and easier to treat. It is best to have a test that finds both polyps and early cancer, such as a colonoscopy or a flexible sigmoidoscopy.

**HOW OFTEN** Colonoscopy every 10 years after age 50 (flexible sigmoidoscopy every five)

## DEPRESSION SCREENING

Untreated depression is bad for both mental and physical health. Let your health care provider know if you're feeling sad or hopeless, or are no longer getting pleasure from things you used to enjoy. He or she can have you answer a series of questions and refer you for treatment, if needed.

**HOW OFTEN** At yearly checkups

## FALLS EVALUATION

Every year, over 700,000 older adults are treated in the ER for fall injuries. Your health care provider should review safety tips and ask if you are getting exercise and enough vitamin D to keep bones strong.

**HOW OFTEN** At every yearly checkup starting at age 65

## CARDIOVASCULAR SCREENING

Two simple tests yield valuable information about your heart health: a blood pressure test and a blood test to measure levels of cholesterol (lipids) and triglycerides.

**HOW OFTEN** Blood pressure every two years; blood test every five years, or more if you have a history of cardiovascular disease

## FOR WOMEN ONLY

**MAMMOGRAMS** Breast cancer remains the most common type of cancer in the United States, and the risks go up with age. Annual mammograms are advised for all women over 40, and every one to two years for women 55 and older.

**PAP SMEARS** To detect changes in the cervix that may indicate early cervical cancer, get one every five years up to age 65, plus an HPV test.

\* These recommendations are not right for every individual; it is important to talk to your health care provider to determine what is right for you. For a comprehensive list of important health screenings by gender, visit [hopkinsmedicine.org/healthlibrary/prevention/women\\_age\\_50\\_64](http://hopkinsmedicine.org/healthlibrary/prevention/women_age_50_64) or [hopkinsmedicine.org/healthlibrary/prevention/men\\_age\\_50\\_64](http://hopkinsmedicine.org/healthlibrary/prevention/men_age_50_64)



## VACCINES

**Older adults need these crucial inoculations:**

- **Flu.** Annually, as soon as that year's vaccine is available.
- **Herpes zoster.** Once after age 60 to reduce your chance of getting shingles by about 51 percent and, if you do get shingles, to reduce your chance of suffering post-herpetic neuralgia, a painful aftereffect.
- **Pneumococcal.** Once after age 60, to help prevent pneumonia. There are two types of this vaccine; pneumococcal conjugate and pneumococcal polysaccharide.
- **Tdap.** A tetanus booster every 10 years; adults over 65 need the tetanus/diphtheria shot (Tdap) that also protects against diphtheria and pertussis.

Health screenings help you live your best life as you get older.

