



A Guide to Cancer Screenings by Age

Ackerman Cancer Center believes that diagnosing cancer early, before the onset of symptoms, improves the chance for successful treatment.

The following guidelines are recommended for most adults. A family history, symptoms or personal risk factors may change your screening recommendations. You should discuss this with your physician and establish a cancer screening plan that is individualized for you.

In your 20s

- Starting at age 21, women should be tested for cervical cancer. Pap tests are recommended every 3 years until age 29. HPV (human papilloma virus) testing for women in their 20s is not recommended unless Pap smear results are abnormal.
- Men and women should do monthly self-examinations for changes in skin or moles, as well as annual total body examinations by their physician.

In your 30s

- Throughout their 30s, women should continue the basic Pap test every 3 years, or opt for co-testing – Pap test plus HPV test, to be performed every 5 years.
- Men and women should do monthly self-examinations for changes in skin or moles, as well as annual total body examinations by their physician.

In your 40s

- Women should continue Pap testing every 3 years or Pap plus HPV testing every 5 years.
- Between ages 40 and 44, women may opt to start annual mammograms to screen for breast cancer. A very small number of women with increased family or genetic risk may be candidates for MRI with mammograms.
- By age 45, all women should start yearly mammogram screenings and continue throughout their 40s.
- Around age 45, men who have a family history of prostate cancer that was diagnosed before age 65, or who are African American, should ask their doctors whether they are candidates for early prostate screenings.
- Men and women should do monthly self-examinations for changes in skin or moles, as well as annual total body examinations by their physician.

In your 50s

- Women in their 50s should continue Pap screens every 3 years or co-testing every 5.
- After menopause, any vaginal bleeding or spotting should be reported to a health care provider to rule out endometrial (uterine) cancer.
- Yearly mammograms are advised for women until age 55. Starting at age 56, women may wish to talk with their doctor about decreasing screenings to every 2 years.
- At age 50, all men should discuss the positives and negatives of prostate cancer screening including PSA blood levels and possibly rectal exam with their health care provider. PSA results determine the frequency of future screening.
- By age 55, annual lung cancer screening may be recommended for both men and women, who are in good health if they have 30 pack-year smoking histories, still smoke, or have quit smoking within the past 15 years. Screening consists of a low-dose CT scan of the chest.
- Starting at age 50, both men and women should begin colorectal screening by colonoscopy every 10 years or a yearly fecal immunochemical test. Other screening options are available that can be discussed with their physician.
- Men and women should do monthly self-examinations for changes in skin or moles, as well as annual total body examinations by their physician.

In your 60s and 70s

- Mammograms should continue for women who are in good health and are expected to live 10 years or longer, since breast cancer risk increases with age.
- Pap tests or co-testing should continue until age 65. Beyond this age, testing is based on previous Pap results and should be discussed with a physician.
- Colorectal screenings are recommended until age 75.
- Yearly lung cancer screenings should continue through age 74 for current smokers as well as those who have smoked within the past 15 years.
- PSA and rectal exams can be continued throughout a man's 60s and 70s. Some men continue testing until age 85, but consult your doctor on when to discontinue prostate screening.
- Men and women should do monthly self-examinations for changes in skin or moles, as well as annual total body examinations by their physician.

For more information about cancer screenings and the diagnostic services offered at Ackerman Cancer Center, please call (904) 880-5522.