

Preventive Medicine

Preventive medicine is a type of health care that focuses on preventing diseases before they occur. One area that is considered a part of preventive medicine is an annual check up or physical. Going to the doctor once a year for an exam and series of routine lab tests can often detect any problems or early signs of illness before they develop into a full-blown condition or disease. For example, a routine fasting glucose test might indicate a higher than normal level. While the test result may be negative for type 2 diabetes, it might indicate that the person has pre-diabetes, which is a risk factor for developing type 2 diabetes. A person that knows they have pre-diabetes can often make changes in his/her diet and physical activity levels to prevent the onset of type 2 diabetes.



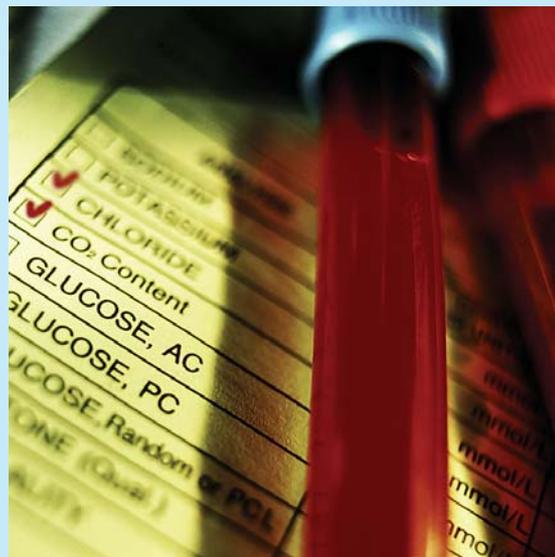
Addressing a health risk as soon as possible is often much less expensive than treating a major health problem.



Many communities offer services, resources, and programs to help their citizens address health concerns and issues. In an effort to reduce health care costs, many communities are offering more preventive medicine types of programs and services than ever before. All citizens should regularly check their local health department's web site to locate these offerings.

In addition to a yearly physical, other preventive medicine tips include:

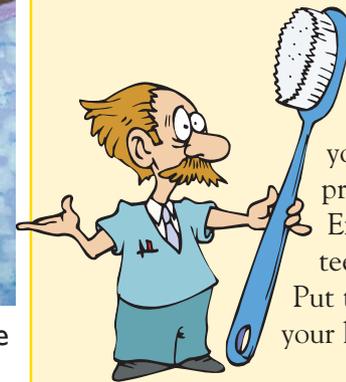
- ✓ Get a flu shot every fall
- ✓ Have regular vision, hearing, and dental check ups
- ✓ Exercise regularly
- ✓ Eat a healthy, balanced diet
- ✓ Maintain a healthy weight
- ✓ Get all necessary immunizations
- ✓ Get blood pressure, glucose, and cholesterol tests regularly
- ✓ Don't drink alcohol
- ✓ Don't use drugs
- ✓ Don't smoke or use smokeless tobacco products



Activities

1. In groups, make a list of health conditions and diseases that can be prevented by eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly, maintaining a healthy weight, and not smoking. Share your list with the other groups.

2. What kinds of services, businesses, or resources are available in your community that could be considered part of a preventive medicine approach?



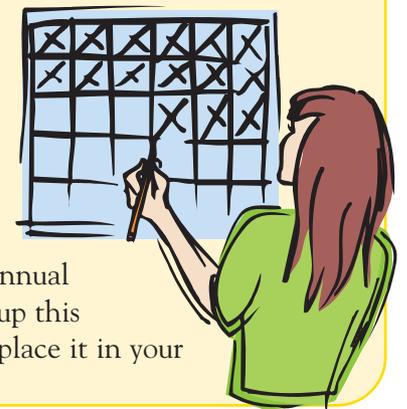
3. For one day, record the activities you do that are preventive in nature. Example - brush your teeth (prevent cavities). Put this assignment in your health portfolio.

4. Create a slide presentation that details reasons for using preventive medicine and types of preventive medicine. Be creative!

5. Make a "Preventive Medicine" poster that illustrates many aspects of this area of medicine.

Home Connection

With your family, record the date of each member's last physical exam. Are there any family members that are overdue for an annual physical? Write up this assignment and place it in your health portfolio.



Discussion Questions

What do you do on a regular basis that could be considered preventive medicine?

When was your last physical or check up?