



The Basic Facts

Preventive Care Recommendations

Medical checklist:	Recommendations:	Dates of last & next test
Blood Pressure & Pulse	Yearly if normal.	
Height & Weight	Yearly if normal. Assess for both under and over weight problems.	
Hemoglobin, complete white blood cell count with differential, platelets and liver function tests	Test at initiation of interferon therapy, repeat in one month, then every three months thereafter.	
Thyroid Function Testing	Test at time of MS diagnosis and also consider for anyone with symptoms of fatigue.	
Urinalysis	Following the completion of treatment for a urinary tract infection, as per physician recommendation.	
Chest X-Ray	Discuss with health-care provider.	
Electrocardiogram (EKG/ECG)	Discuss with health-care provider.	
Total Skin Exam	Discuss with health-care provider. Sun avoidance and sunscreen use are recommended.	



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Dental Cleaning and Examination	Every 6 months. (Note: Make sure your dentist has a current list of all the medications you are taking. If daily tooth care becomes difficult, discuss with health-care provider and consider electric appliances.)	
Over age 20		
Fasting Cholesterol (with HDL, LDL & triglycerides)	Every 5 years starting at age 20, or more often per physician recommendation.	
Fasting Blood Sugar	Every 5 years starting at age 20, or more often per physician recommendation.	
Over age 40		
Thyroid	Consider testing annually for women age 40 and older and for anyone with symptoms of fatigue.	
Visual Acuity/Glaucoma	Every 2-4 years for ages 40-65, then yearly.	
Over age 50		
Stool for Occult Blood	Yearly (three stool guaiac cards) starting at age 50.	
Sigmoidoscopy/Colonoscopy	Every 5 years starting at age 50 for sigmoidoscopy or every 10 years for colonoscopy. Begin screening high-risk individuals earlier. Consult with physician about frequency. (Reference: America Cancer Society)	
Hearing	Every 5 years over age 50.	

Medical checklist:	Recommendations:	Dates of last & next test
For those with risk factors		
Bone Density Test	Once, for everyone with risk factors including prolonged use of steroids or anticonvulsants, a family history of osteoporosis, and a sedentary lifestyle. Retest periodically, especially women approaching or following menopause.	
PPD (purified protein derivative)	Every 1-2 years if at high risk for tuberculosis (including health-care workers, persons with HIV, persons living in areas where TB is prevalent).	
Fasting Blood Sugar	At least every 5 years for those with risk factors such as obesity or family history of Type II diabetes.	
Women Only		
Pap smear	At least every 1-3 years for women who are or have been sexually active and have a cervix. The American Cancer Society recommends initiation no later than age 21. Other organizations recommend age 18 because of the high prevalence of sexual activity.	
Clinical Breast Exam (by health-care provider)	Yearly.	
Self Breast Exam	Monthly.	
Mammogram	Every 1-2 years starting at age 40. (The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommends every 1-2 years from age 40-49 and annually over 50 years. The American Cancer Society recommends annually starting at age 40.) If there is a family history of breast cancer, consult with a physician about appropriate beginning age.	

Medical checklist:	Recommendations:	Dates of last & next test
Men Only		
Prostate exam (digital rectal exam)	Yearly starting at age 50, except for African-Americans or those who have a family history of prostate cancer, then start at age 40.	
PSA (prostate specific antigen) test	Yearly starting at age 50, except for African-Americans or those who have a family history of prostate cancer, then start at age 40.	
Clinical Testicular Exam (by health care provider)	Yearly.	
Testicular Self Exam	Monthly. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends starting at age eighteen.	
Vaccines:	Recommendations:	Dates
Immunizations		
Tetanus-Diphtheria	Boosters every 10 years.	
Influenza Immunization	Yearly for those who are susceptible to the flu, likely to be exposed, or have respiratory problems or certain chronic disorders. Pregnant women who will be in second or third trimester during flu season should also receive a flu shot.	
Hepatitis B Immunization	Health-care or public-safety workers who have exposure to blood in workplace. Household contacts and sex partners of those infected with hepatitis. Sexually active men and women with more than 1 partner in last 6 months or with recently acquired sexually transmitted diseases. Intravenous drug abusers.	
Pneumococcal Immunization	Once at age 65 or older. If received before age 65, need booster after 5 years.	

Vaccines:	Recommendations:	Dates
Other Immunizations		
<p>Supplemental immunizations (hepatitis A, for example) may be needed in special circumstances such as overseas travel. For more information about immunizations, visit our website at nationalmssociety.org and search for keyword: <i>vaccinations</i>.</p>		

General Health and Safety Recommendations

- **Stop smoking (or don't start)** to reduce your risk of cancer and heart disease. It's not too late to join a smoking cessation group and/or consider medication to help decrease desire to smoke.
- **Exercise regularly.** Check with your doctor before starting on a new exercise program.
- **Eat a well-balanced diet.** Limit fat and cholesterol. Emphasize fresh fruits, fresh vegetables and grains to reduce risk of heart disease, control constipation, and maintain a healthy body weight.
- **Drink fluids.** Drink plenty of fluids every day to maintain general health, health of urinary system, and lessen constipation.
- **Maintain a healthy body weight.** If you are overweight, lose weight to reduce your risk of developing heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, and other diseases.
- **Consume adequate calcium.** Adults between ages 19-50 should consume 1200 mg daily. Women aged 51 and older and men aged 65 and older should consume 1200-1500 mg daily.
- **Vitamin D.** Many American adults are at risk of vitamin D deficiency, including elders, African-Americans, overweight people, and those with limited sun exposure. Low vitamin D levels can cause numerous symptoms. Ask your clinician about blood testing and appropriate supplementation.
- Women of childbearing age should be consuming 0.4-0.8 mg of **folic acid every day** to prevent common birth

defects (neural tube defects or spina bifida). Folic acid (or folate) is a vitamin that is contained in many multivitamin supplements.

- Give each of your healthcare providers a **current list of all of the medications** (prescription and non-prescription) you are taking.
- **Alcohol** can affect balance, coordination, and thinking. It depresses the nervous system and may interact with your medications. Check with your doctor about whether alcohol is safe for you, and if so, how much and how often.

- **Protect yourself against sexually transmitted diseases** by using condoms whenever appropriate, and by using your best judgment with sexual partners.
- Wear **lap and shoulder belts** while driving or riding in vehicles.
- Install and maintain **smoke detectors**.

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society is proud to be a source of information about multiple sclerosis. Our comments are based on professional advice, published experience and expert opinion, but do not represent individual therapeutic recommendation or prescription. For specific information and advice, consult your personal physician.

nationalMSsociety.org

For Information: **1 800 FIGHT MS**

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