



Prairie Faith Parish Nurse News~~March 2021

Body

Mind

Spirit

It's estimated that at least 4 in 10 adults have delayed or cancelled routine health-related visits due to concerns about COVID-19 during the past year. Check to see if you are overdue for a checkup—even if you have been feeling well!

There are a number of regular health screenings recommended for all adults, and additionally, your primary care physician will review your personal health history as well as your family history, to determine additional screenings that are recommended. Screenings may depend on your age and your risk factors, and may occur annually or every few years.

Below is a list of the common **recommended screenings for adults**. (There are additional screenings recommended during pregnancy and for children.) If your physician has not visited with you about one or more of these topics recently, initiate the conversation with them to insure you are maintaining your best level of health and wellness.



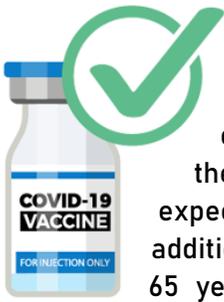
- ♥ **Blood pressure:** high blood pressure often has no symptoms, and it increases your risk for heart disease, stroke, and kidney disease. BP is easy to check at an appointment, at a pharmacy or at home with your own equipment.
- ♥ **Cholesterol:** elevated levels are associated with heart attacks and strokes.
- ♥ **Stomach, colon and rectal issues:** colonoscopy recommended at age 50 and every 10 years; some people more frequently with certain diagnoses. Be sure to talk to your physician about any symptoms.
- ♥ **Depression:** untreated, depression is associated with increased risk of suicide, drug/alcohol use, and relationship and employment issues. Talk to your physician if you have persistent sadness or excessive worry and anxiety.
- ♥ **Blood glucose:** elevated levels affect your heart, blood vessels, kidneys, eyes.
- ♥ **Skin cancer:** melanomas and certain other skin cancers can spread internally—have your physician check out any suspicious moles or spots. If skin cancer is diagnosed, consider annual visits to the dermatologist.
- ♥ **Body weight:** more than 2/3 of Americans are overweight or obese, contributing to health issues such as heart disease, stroke, Type 2 diabetes, some cancers, osteoarthritis, sleep apnea, pain. Your physician can give you information about healthy nutrition and physical activity, and there are community initiatives to help you maintain a healthy weight.
- ♥ **Lung cancer:** low-dose CT scan is recommended for people over 55 with a history of smoking, even if you have stopped smoking within the past 15 years.
- ♥ **Breast cancer:** women should check with their physician about what age to have the first mammogram and the frequency of testing—some recommend beginning at age 50, some at 40, or even earlier for high-risk women.
- ♥ **Cervical cancer:** screening begins at age 21, frequency varies with age and prior results—again, check with your doctor.
- ♥ **Bone density:** at age 65 for most women, sometimes earlier; and some men at high risk may be screened, as well. This screening can help prevent fractures and other disability.
- ♥ **Abdominal aortic aneurysm:** this screening is an ultrasound primarily for men 65-75 years of age who have ever smoked.
- ♥ Your physician will discuss use of tobacco, alcohol or drugs; risk for sexually transmitted infections; intimate partner violence.

Additionally:

- ♥ **Eye exams:** every 1-2 years depending on your age to check not only your vision, but for glaucoma, cataracts, macular degeneration, and effects of high blood pressure, diabetes and autoimmune diseases.
- ♥ **Hearing test:** untreated hearing loss can result in anxiety, depression, feelings of isolation.
- ♥ **Dental exams:** recommended every 6-12 months, with more frequent visits if problems are detected. Dentists can screen for oral cancer as well as providing care for teeth.
- ♥ Check with your **local health department** to insure you are up to date for vaccinations recommended for your age group: children have their own recommended schedule; adults need Td (tetanus/diphtheria) boosters at least every 10 years, more often with certain injuries (or Tdap which is tetanus/diphtheria/pertussis). Age 50+ need 2 Shingrix (shingles vaccine), and 65 + should consider a pneumonia vaccine. And of course, every fall, most people should receive the influenza vaccine. Information for the COVID-19 vaccine is on page 2.

This list is not completely comprehensive, but your physician can visit with you to determine if other lab work or tests are needed based on symptoms, medical history, and family history. Because time in a medical appointment is often limited, you will want to make a list ahead of time of questions and concerns that you have; be sure to mention concerning symptoms to your physician! As always, feel free to contact the parish nurse for more information about this article or to help you prepare for a medical appointment!

(Source of information: American Academy of Family Physicians; U.S. Preventative Services Task Force)



COVID-19 VACCINE STATUS: If you are interested in obtaining a COVID-19 vaccination, persons of all ages are now strongly encouraged to call their local health department to be placed on the waiting list. The priority at this time is still with K-12 teachers and staff, persons aged 65 and older, people living in congregate settings, and other high-contact critical workers. In visiting with the Trego County Health Department, locally, vaccinations are proceeding on schedule and it is expected that adults under age 65 wanting the vaccine can be scheduled within the next few months. In addition, there are some Kansas pharmacies who are receiving vaccine—currently primarily for those over 65 years of age. More information about the COVID-19 vaccine in Kansas can be found online at <https://www.kansasvaccine.gov/>. And as always, everyone is encouraged to continue to follow usual public health recommendations to avoid spreading an illness: stay home if you feel sick, cover your coughs and sneezes, use frequent handwashing, etc. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or if you need a ride to obtain your vaccine—and help us spread the word to others.

Public Transportation Van Update

After several years of research, community needs assessment, meetings, obtaining financial support from the community, grant-writing, waiting, and more waiting, the **Trego Community Public Transportation van** has arrived! Interviews for drivers and trip coordinators have been completed, and selected applicants are in the process of obtaining DOT physicals, drug testing, and KDOT training. Appreciation goes to **Heartland Community Foundation** for approving a grant proposal to cover the costs of help-wanted advertising, driver training, DOT physicals, a child safety seat and a cell phone. Heartfelt thanks to members of **Immanuel Lutheran Church** upon their congregational closing, for a very generous financial contribution which is designated for other startup funds for this service. It is hoped that the van will be available for use in our area by April or May—this van will be able to serve not only Trego County, but areas of neighboring counties. Stay tuned for more updates about the van!



O God, early in the morning I cry to you.
Help me to pray, and to concentrate my thoughts on you; I cannot do this alone.

In me there is darkness, but with you there is light;
I am lonely, but you do not leave me;
I am feeble in heart, but with you there is help;
I am restless, but with you there is peace.
In me there is bitterness, but with you there is patience;
I do not understand your ways, but you know the way for me...

Restore me to liberty,
And enable me so to live now
that I may answer before you and before me,
Lord, whatever this day may bring,
Your name be praised.
Amen.

Prayer by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Feel free to call or email me to: schedule a confidential appointment to discuss your health/wellness questions, schedule transportation to a medical/dental/counseling appointment if you need a ride, request a prayer shawl for someone in the community going through a difficult time, locate community resources, request other parish nurse work, or discuss your ideas for the health ministry! 😊

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785-769-4731 (leave a message, please)