

Your Appointment Checklist

Once the physical exam is finished, you and your doctor will spend time going over the results. You'll schedule any additional testing appropriate to your age and gender—mammograms or colorectal cancer screenings, for instance. Work out how you'll hear the results of your tests—phone, mail, during a follow-up visit or at ProHealth's online office at www.prohealthmd.com. Find out when you need your next physical and schedule it as you leave the office.

To find out more about a variety of health issues—and for access to your practitioner via e-mail—visit www.prohealthmd.com.

- Make a list of any health care problems and questions you have.
- Write down your medications and their dosages, and include any vitamins and supplements.
- Update any new information about your family's medical history—and yours.
- During your physical exam, point out any areas that concern you to your doctor.
- Discuss any findings with your doctor. Make arrangements for any routine testing that hasn't taken place today (blood tests or mammograms, for instance) as well as any special testing that needs to happen.
- Ask how you'll find out your test results.
- Find out when you're due for your next physical and schedule it today.

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The preventive physical: your key to good health



Welcome! This office is part of **ProHealth Physicians**, Connecticut's leading group of primary care practitioners. Everyone here is committed to your good health.

We're also committed to good communication. During your physical, you and your doctor will discuss your general health and any problems you may be experiencing, then focus on general disease prevention and health maintenance. This pamphlet explains the how's and why's of a physical; after all, *your health is our primary care...*



Getting Ready for Your Physical

- Your physician will want to review both your and your family's past medical history. Before your visit is a good time to check with family members to clarify any history of certain diseases; this information can provide vital clues to disease prevention and cure.
- Have you been experiencing any health problems? Making a list is a smart idea. Think, too, about any particular stresses in your life that could affect your physical well being.
- Have you recently seen a specialist or visited an emergency room?
- Bring an accurate list of any medications, vitamins and supplements you are taking—along with their dosages. Your doctor will also want to know if you've switched medications recently.
- Do you have allergies, and have any new ones cropped up lately?
- Please remember to bring your insurance card.

What Goes on During a Physical Exam?

- Among the subjects you're likely to talk about with your doctor are any travel plans that could require immunizations, medications you currently take, your current well-being and any symptoms you may be having.
- During the exam, you'll survey your major organ systems—heart, lungs, digestive, skeletal, skin, hearing and sight. Remind the doctor of any areas of concern to you. For instance, you might discuss one or more of the following:

Upper Body

- Mention any ringing or other problems you may have had with your **ears**. (It isn't necessary to clean your ears before the visit; in fact, this can make wax problems worse.) Your doctor will check your **eyes**, but if you are over 40, we recommend an exam with an ophthalmologist (an MD specializing in eyes) or an optometrist (a non-medical eye specialist) to check for glaucoma in particular. Any sore area in the **mouth** or on the tongue should be reviewed.
- Your doctor will palpate (explore by touching) the thyroid and lymph nodes in your **neck**, and, if you are an older patient, listen with a stethoscope to the carotid arteries for any signs of blockage. Normally, you can feel some of the small lymph nodes, sometimes called glands, in the neck, under the arms and in the groin; point out any unusually sized lymph nodes.
- With a stethoscope, your doctor will spend some time listening to your **heart** and **lungs**. Women can expect a careful **breast** exam, and your doctor will discuss breast self-exams (for more information, check www.prohealthmd.com). Point out any swelling or tender areas.

Lower Body

- Your practitioner will examine your **abdomen**, palpating the liver and spleen and looking for unusual tenderness. Deep palpation of the **aorta**, the major artery leading from the heart, may also be done to assess its size and the possibility of an aortic aneurysm, an abnormal enlargement.

- A **genital** exam follows. In men, the testicles will be palpated along with a check for hernias (for more information on testicular self-exams, visit www.prohealthmd.com). Women will receive a Pap smear every one to three years along with a manual exam of the uterus and ovaries, unless a yearly gynecological check-up is part of your health care profile.
- A **rectal** exam will be done to check for abnormal masses or blood, and, in men over 40, to assess the prostate gland.

Other Body Business

- Point out any **joints, muscles** or **bones** that may be troubling you. If any **moles** have changed or bother you in any way, or if any lesions haven't healed or don't look right to you, indicate them.
- Your doctor will check the pulses in your feet for any **circulatory** problems. And your balance and reflexes will be tested as part of a **neurological** assessment. How you respond to questions and the way you move also help with this part of your physical, and, depending on any symptoms, there may be other tests, too.

If you would like a chaperone during your exam, please let us know. Your comfort is important to us. An assistant will be present for all gynecological examinations.