

What Exams and When?

TYPE OF EXAM	FREQUENCY
SELF - EXAM Breast exam	Once a month after age 20.
Skin check	Once every three months, or more often if your doctor recommends it.
PHYSICIAN EXAM Complete physical	Once every five years to age 45. Then, depending on your health, every two or three years until 65. Then every year. Should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weight, height, blood pressure, heart rate. • Breast exam. • Skin, eye, and ear exams. • Routine blood and urine tests. • Abdominal and neck stethoscope exams. • Lymph node exam. • Sigmoidoscopy (after 50). • Stool test for occult blood (after 50). • Chest X-ray (if doctor suspects a problem). • Pelvic exam and Pap smear.
Dental checkup	Every six months to a year for exam and regular cleaning.
Eye exam	Every two years if you wear glasses or contacts; if you have good vision, start eye exams every two years after 40.
Hearing	Once during adolescence; no need after unless problems appear.
Blood pressure	At least once every other year. More often if you're overweight, have a family history, or if you're African American.
Cholesterol	At least once every five years starting at 20.
Electrocardiogram	Baseline once before 40, then as often as your doctor recommends.
Skin check	Once every three years from 20 to 39; once a year after 40.
Colon	Digital rectal exam and sigmoidoscopy once every five years beginning at age 50.
Fecal occult blood test	Once a year after 50.
Breast exam	Every three years for women in their 20s and 30s; once a year after 40.
Mammogram	Once a year for women 40 and over.
Pap smear and pelvic exam	Once a year for women 18 and over; also once a year for younger women who are sexually active or who smoke.
Bone density	Soon after menopause, if considering hormone replacement therapy or bone-building drugs.