

Health checks

for every age!



There's so many conflicting messages out there when it comes to your health. We've spoken to Embarrassing Bodies Down Under Dr Sam Hay to see what health checks you should be getting and when. Follow his advice and you'll be on the right track to good health!



In your 20s...

*** Pap smear**
This test detects changes to cells in the cervix before they develop into cervical cancer. It's strongly advised for all sexually active women aged over 18, even if you have been vaccinated against HPV. Arrange a test with your GP or local sexual health clinic.
Frequency: Every 2 years

*** Blood pressure**
High blood pressure has no symptoms, but it's a major risk factor for stroke, heart disease and heart failure. To catch it early on, book a check-up with your GP.
Frequency: Every two years

*** Breast check**
Women should carry out regular monthly breast self-examinations to detect early signs of cancer. Speak to your GP immediately if you notice any changes in the colour, size or shape of your breasts or nipples. Look out particularly for redness, dimpling, lumps or nipple discharge.
Frequency: Monthly

*** Teeth and gums**
In addition to daily brushing and flossing, annual dental check-ups are advised to prevent gingivitis tooth decay. Be aware of bleeding gums, toothaches and dental trauma.
Frequency: Yearly

50s

30s

40s

*** Skin cancer check**
If detected early, 95 per cent of skin cancers are treatable. Perform regular checks in natural light, paying close



attention to arms, legs, face, back, neck, shoulders and hands. If you're worried, book a more thorough screening with your GP or dermatologist.
Frequency: Monthly self-check

*** STI screenings**
Often symptomless, STIs can cause infertility and can even be passed on from mother to baby during pregnancy or birth. Depending on how sexually active you are, and whether

you use condoms consistently, it's a good idea to get checked. If you or your partner has had unprotected sex, either within a relationship, or with other sexual partners, get tested!
Frequency: Yearly

*** Body mass test**
Many chronic diseases, such as type 2 diabetes and heart disease, are associated with being overweight. A BMI (body mass index) of 20-25 is considered a healthy range for most young and middle-aged adults. To maintain a healthy weight, check your BMI regularly and discuss any weight loss plans with your GP.
Frequency: Monthly

In your 30s...

Remember to keep the above health checks going!



*** High cholesterol**
High cholesterol is a significant risk factor for blocked arteries, which can lead to heart attack, stroke or gangrene. High cholesterol, combined with other risk factors such as smoking, poor diet and weight gain can take their toll on your heart. A cholesterol level of under 5.5 mmol/L is considered safe. Book a test with your GP.
Frequency: Every 2 years

In your 40s...

*** Type 2 diabetes**
The Australian government offers a free health check to patients, aged 45 to 49 years, who are at risk of developing a chronic disease such as type 2 diabetes or heart disease. If you have a family history of diabetes or live an unhealthy lifestyle, see your GP and apply for this test. Your GP should also be able to provide information on decreasing the risk of developing the disease.
Frequency: Once (plus further appointments, if necessary)

*** Eye check**
Glaucoma is a leading cause of blindness in Australia but early detection can get it under control. If blindness runs in the family, or if you've never been tested, book an appointment with your optometrist. An eye check can also identify diabetes and many other problems which may affect your overall quality of life.
Frequency: Every 5 years

*** Bone density scan**
Carried out by trained radiologists, this painless scan measures the strength of your bones to identify osteoporosis (brittle bones). For info, visit www.howdenseareyou.org.au
Frequency: Every 2-5 years



In your 50s and later ...

*** Mammogram**
This low-dose X-ray identifies subtle changes in the breast tissue that can't be felt during a regular breast examination, so it's important to have a test regularly. BreastScreen Australia provides free screening to all women over 40, and specifically targets those aged 50-69. To book an appointment, visit www.cancerscreening.gov.au.
Frequency: Every 2 years

*** Faecal occult blood test (FOBT)**
The FOBT checks for blood in your stool - a symptom of colon cancer or polyps. Your GP can arrange for an FOBT kit to be sent to your home. Follow the instructions and send the sample back to the pathology lab for analysis.
Frequency: Every 2 years.

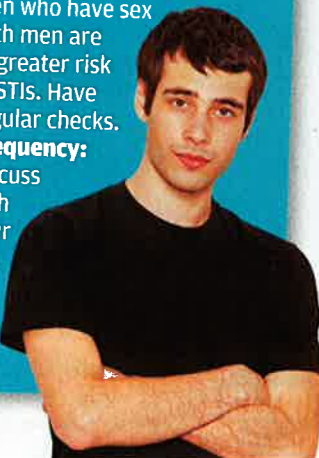
*** Hearing assessment**
It's estimated that around half the population aged between 60-70 have some level of hearing loss, which increases further with age. Your doctor can treat minor conditions that cause temporary hearing loss, such as ear infections, but they can also refer you to a specialist hearing service for treatment of more permanent hearing problems.
Frequency: With symptoms

For men only

*** Testes examination**
Testicular cancer is most common in men aged 20-40. To be safe, perform this quick and simple test at home. Using your fingers and thumb, feel the testes, one at a time. Not all lumps or swellings will be cancer, but if you notice something unusual or have any concerns, ask your GP to check it out right away.
Frequency: Monthly self exam

*** Prostate check**
If you are suffering from symptoms such as getting up to urinate more than twice a night or experience difficulty 'going', you should book in for a prostate check with your doctor. Screening for prostate cancer is controversial and needs to be discussed in detail with your GP. When conducted, it usually involves a digital rectal examination and a test for elevated levels of a protein called prostate specific antigen (PSA).

*** STI test**
Men who have sex with men are at greater risk of STIs. Have regular checks.
Frequency: Discuss with your GP.



Turn the page to read about Sarah's life-saving Pap test

I can see something

A routine pap test saved my life

Sarah Maree Cameron, Melbourne, Vic.

The day I went for my Pap test, I was feeling calm and relaxed.

I was only 22, but I'd been going regularly since I was 18. My mum, Zara and big sister, Jeanette, had both had abnormal results in the past, so I knew the importance of regular checks.

So far, I'd had the all-clear. I never thought I'd have a similar problem, I just thought Mum and Jeanette had been unlucky.

As usual I lay back and held my breath as my doctor gently performed the examination and took a swab. It wasn't painful.

"I can see something," she said, trailing off.

She didn't seem too alarmed, so I tried not to panic, but I agreed then and there to a biopsy.

She booked me in for a laparoscopy the following week at Epworth Hospital.

I was put under anaesthetic and my abdomen was pumped with gas.

When I woke up, it felt like an elephant was sitting on me. The gas takes time to leave the body after surgery, which can be quite painful!

A couple of days later, I received a call to say my results were in.

"That doesn't sound good," I said anxiously to Mum.

The doctor explained I had the early stages of cervical cancer.

"We think we managed to cut it all out but we advise further treatment, just in case," he said.

I couldn't believe it. My last Pap test had been absolutely fine.

"I need to ask if you smoke?" the doctor said.

"Yes," I replied, feeling guilty.

I didn't smoke in the week but I'd easily get through two packets come the weekend.

"That speeds up the growth of cervical cancer," he replied.

I had a treatment, known as LEEP (loop electrosurgical excision Procedure), a few weeks later. This is where an electrical wire loop

burns away any remaining cancerous cells.

I've since had the all-clear and I couldn't be happier.

If it wasn't for that routine Pap test, my cancer would've gone undetected and, because I smoked, it could've killed me.

I've since told all my friends to sign up for the free 'Get the Pap Text' reminder from the Australian Cervical Cancer Foundation (www.accf.org.au). It's part of their Be Bright awareness campaign.

And I've also thrown away the cigarettes for good.

It's worth it to be healthy and cancer-free!



AS TOLD TO CLAIRE MCATEER



ASK YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT CLINICALLY PROVEN WAYS TO HELP YOU LOSE WEIGHT.



DIET AND EXERCISE NOT ENOUGH? PUT YOUR DOCTOR ON YOUR SIDE.

doctoronyourside.com.au

iNova Pharmaceuticals, ABN 88 000 222 408, Level 10,12 Help Street, Chatswood, NSW 2067, 2013-09-056 INP0015 McCann Healthcare October 2013

inova
pharmaceuticals
A Valeant Company