

Health checks

Regular health checks are an important part of staying well, as they can help to detect illness or disease early. If you have a higher risk of any condition due to your family history, or your own age and health, you'll need to make your own health check plan with your doctor.

BOWEL HEALTH	<p>Bowel cancer is a common cancer and, if detected early, has a good recovery rate. A bowel cancer test is recommended every 2 years between 50-74 years of age. This can be done by you in your home with an easy-to-use faecal occult blood test (FOBT). To have a test kit sent to you, call Bowel Cancer Australia on 1800 555 494.</p>
BONE HEALTH	<p>You may be at increased risk of osteoporosis (fragile bones) if you have or have had: an eating disorder; thyroid problems; a poor diet; taken certain medications such as steroids; a family history of osteoporosis, or; a previous fracture. Talk to your doctor about your risk and ways to maintain strong bones.</p> <p>Also, after menopause women are at increased risk of osteoporosis. If you are at risk, or 70 years of age or older, your doctor may suggest a bone density scan (DXA).</p>
BREAST HEALTH	<p>Early detection of breast cancer increases the chances of treatment success. Conduct a monthly self-examination from your 20s and have a screening mammogram every 2 years between 50-74 years of age. Contact BreastScreen Australia on 13 20 50 for more information and to find a screening location near you.</p>
CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH	<p>You may not know if you are developing cardiovascular or heart disease, therefore it is important to have a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• blood pressure check – every 2 years after you turn 18• cholesterol check – every 5 years after you turn 45, or more frequently if at higher risk• diabetes check – blood sugars every 3 years after you turn 40, or more frequently if at higher risk.
CERVICAL SCREENING TEST	<p>This has replaced the Pap test as the standard screening test to detect cervical cancer. If you are 25 to 74 years old, have a cervix and have ever been sexually active, your first Cervical Screening Test is due two years after your last Pap test. After that, you will need to have the test only every five years if your results are normal. If you are 25 years of age or older and have never had a Pap test, make an appointment with your healthcare provider as soon as possible to have a Cervical Screening Test.</p>

FERTILITY & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH	<p>Be in the best health you can before becoming pregnant. A pre-pregnancy health check is a good idea to assess things such as your immunisation status, general health, smoking and alcohol habits, and weight.</p>
IMMUNISATION	<p>Immunisations increase your body's ability to fight certain infections.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before becoming sexually active, girls and boys are advised to have the vaccine for the human papillomavirus (HPV), to help prevent genital cancers • Check your childhood immunisations are up to date; for example, you may need a tetanus or whooping cough booster • It is recommended to have a flu vaccination if you: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ are older than 65 ◦ are pregnant – especially in the last trimester because your baby will also be protected ◦ have a chronic condition such as severe asthma or diabetes ◦ are worried that you are likely to get the flu and it would impact you significantly • If you are over 65 years of age, have a pneumococcal vaccine.
MENTAL & EMOTIONAL HEALTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are experiencing symptoms such as intense sadness, irritability, fatigue, anxiety, or have had changes to your eating or sleeping habits, see your doctor to discuss these symptoms as early as you can • Intimate partner violence is one of the biggest influences on women's health. If you don't have someone to talk to, please call 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732).
SEXUAL HEALTH	<p>If you are under 30 years of age and sexually active, have a urine test for chlamydia each year. Chlamydia can affect your fertility, but often has no symptoms. If you have sex with one or more new partners without a condom, it is recommended you talk to your doctor about checking for other sexually transmissible diseases.</p>
SKIN HEALTH	<p>Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world. Monitor your skin, particularly for changes in the size, shape or colour of spots, or anything unusual such as pain or sensation. Talk with your doctor about what to do next.</p>

For more information go to jeanhailes.org.au/health-a-z

Updated October 2018

This fact sheet is designed to be informative and educational. It is not intended to provide specific medical advice or replace advice from your medical practitioner.

Jean Hailes for Women's Health gratefully acknowledges the support of the Australian Government.

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