

Preventative Health Care

This is a term often used but what is it?

*It involves detecting potential or actual health problems **before** they have caused you any harm. This brochure will discuss some of the most important areas.*

As your family doctor, we are in the best position to advise you about screening and prevention.

You should discuss screening and prevention with your doctor using the guidelines overleaf to determine the areas that apply to you.

See your doctor to discuss self-management of these symptoms



PREVENTATIVE HEALTH CARE

This brochure has been produced as a resource for our patients.

Any questions regarding your health should be discussed with your doctor.

Burwood Health Care
400 Burwood Highway
Burwood
Vic 3125
Ph: 03 9888 8177
Fax: 03 9888 8939
www.burwoodhealthcare.com.au

Weekdays: 8am to 10pm
Weekends: 8am to 8pm
Public Holidays: 8am to 8pm

Burwood HealthCare

PATIENT HEALTH INFORMATION

Blood Pressure
Smoking
Diabetes
Cholesterol
Bowel Cancer
Immunisation
Skin Cancer
Weight
Sexual Health
Pap Smears
Breast Cancer
Osteoporosis
Prostate Disease

PREVENTATIVE HEALTH CARE

EVERYONE

Blood Pressure

Most people who have high blood pressure don't have any symptoms, that is, it does not make them feel unwell. The way most people find out they have high blood pressure is when we do a routine check.

High blood pressure can, if left untreated, lead to heart disease, strokes, kidney and eye problems. It is therefore important to have your blood pressure checked regularly.

Smoking

Most people are aware that smoking is bad for your health. It can lead to heart disease, strokes, chronic bronchitis and lung cancer. It can also harm baby when a woman is pregnant and worsen Asthma in your children. Most people who smoke have, at some time thought about, or tried to quit. You should ask your family doctor about the number of ways in which we can help you to quit.

Diabetes

There are two types of Diabetes. Type 2 Diabetes starts in adulthood, usually after the age of 40. It can be present and doing harm to your body without you being aware that you have developed it. It is therefore important to have your blood sugar level checked at regular intervals if you are over the age of 40, especially if you have a family history of Diabetes.

Cholesterol

High cholesterol or triglycerides in the blood can cause damage to the heart and arteries. However, there is no way of knowing whether it is high unless you have it routinely tested. That is because high cholesterol causes no symptoms (ie you don't feel it). The most accurate reading is obtained after fasting for 12 hours. The fasting is usually done overnight and the blood test taken in the morning. Treatment often involves modifying your diet, which we can advise on.

Bowel Cancer

Bowel Cancer can affect anyone but it is most common after the age of 40. If you have any relatives who have had Bowel Cancer, or, you are over 40 you should discuss screening with your doctor.

Immunization

It is important that everyone is up to date with their immunizations - adults and children.

The Australian immunization schedule recommends vaccinations all children should have. These are outlined in your Child Health Record (yellow book). It is vital that your child has these immunizations as close to the recommended time as possible. At Burwood Health Care we are able to give all these immunizations.

Adults should also have the following vaccinations:

- ♦ Influenza

Every year for those over 65 and those with a chronic illness (eg Asthma, Heart Disease, Cancer, Diabetes)

- ♦ Tetanus and Polio

Booster every 10 years

- ♦ Hepatitis B

For sexually active adults and for people who may be exposed to this in their work.

You may also need immunizations if you are travelling overseas. We are a licensed travel vaccination centre. You should allow 6 weeks before departure to start any immunizations.

Skin Cancer

Skin cancers can be deadly if left untreated. They are easily treated if caught early enough. You should have regular routine checks. If you have a mole or spot that has changed shape or colour, or bled, you should consult your doctor as soon as possible.

Weight

Obesity is a risk factor for developing Heart Disease and Diabetes. You should attempt to keep your weight in the ideal range, depending on your height. Your doctor can advise you what your ideal weight is and how to attain and maintain it.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Safe sex is mandatory in Preventing AIDS, Hepatitis B, Syphilis, Herpes, Gonorrhoea and Chlamydia. If you have had unsafe sex and are concerned that you may have picked up one of these, you should ask your doctor to order an STD screen.

FOR WOMEN

Pap Smears

Pap smears are the way in which we screen for cancer of the cervix (the opening to the womb). With screening, we can pick up early changes which may, if left lead to cancer of the cervix. These early changes can be treated easily to prevent cancer developing. All women over the age of 18 should have a pap smear every 2 years if they have **ever** been sexually active.

Breast Cancer

Breast cancer can affect any woman, but it is more likely in those women over the age of 40 and women who have a family history of breast cancer. If you are in one of these groups, ask your doctor about screening. This is usually done with a mammogram and an examination for lumps in the breast. Breast self-examination is a technique you can use to detect breast lumps early. Your doctor will give you a brochure and instruct you in this technique.

Osteoporosis

This condition causes 'thinning of the bones' and makes fractures of the bones more likely. It is more common in women who have a family history of it. Bone density testing can pick up this condition and help you decide about hormone replacement therapy in menopause which can greatly reduce the progression of this condition.

FOR MEN

Prostate Cancer

The overwhelming majority of men with prostatic symptoms have a condition known as benign prostatic enlargement. That is an age-related enlargement of the prostate which interferes with the passage of urine but is **not** dangerous. A small percentage of these men will have prostate cancer. However, the two conditions are unrelated. If you are concerned or have any problems in passing urine, you should discuss this with your doctor who may need to order a blood test and, or perform an examination.