



# Live Well, Work Well

Health and wellness tips for your work, home and life—brought to you by SullivanCurtisMonroe Insurance Services, LLC



## WOMEN'S HEALTH: PREVENTIVE SCREENINGS – PART TWO

Meeting with your doctor regularly and establishing a relationship will not only make you feel more comfortable, but it will also help your doctor get to know you and your body, making it easier to detect changes. You should talk to your doctor about preventive care and stay on track with the following preventive screenings.

### Mammograms

Early detection is an important factor in the success of treating breast cancer. Screenings can lead to finding and treating lumps in your breasts one to three years before you would have felt or noticed them.

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommends that women start regular mammograms at 40 years old—instead of the previously recommended age of 50. Similarly, according to the American Cancer Society (ACS), women between 40 and 44 have the option to start screening every year. The ACS recommends that women start having mammogram screenings every year starting at age 45 through 54. Women 55 and older can switch to a mammogram every other year or continue yearly screenings. Regardless of age, however, high-risk women should talk to their doctors about whether to have mammograms and how often.

### Pap Smears

A Pap smear looks for changes in the cells within the cervix. These changes can predict cervical cancer or conditions that could eventually develop into cancer. It's generally recommended that women have their first Pap

smear at age 21, and, after age 21, the following screening schedule is suggested:

- Age 21 to 29—every three years.
- Age 30 to 65—every five years if combined with an HPV test, or every three years if done alone.
- Age 65 and older—you may stop having Pap tests if you've had adequate prior screening and do not have a high risk for cervical cancer.

### Pelvic Exams

A pelvic exam allows doctors to look for signs of illness within the organs including the uterus, cervix, fallopian tubes, ovaries, bladder and rectum. Current guidelines recommend that pelvic exams be done at the same time as Pap smears, and also recommend that pelvic exams do not begin until age 21.

### Cholesterol Screenings

Undesirable levels of cholesterol raise your risk of heart attack and stroke. A simple blood test can evaluate total cholesterol, LDL cholesterol, HDL cholesterol and triglycerides.

The USPSTF recommends that women aged 20 or older should have their cholesterol tested every four to six years. Screening frequency increases to every

