

The “when” and “why” of preventive care



It's better to regularly monitor and replace your car's tires than to tend to them only when you get a flat. Just like it's better to get a screen protector for your new phone right away instead of after the display is cracked. Really, it's advantageous to be proactive instead of reactive in just about every area of your life, especially your health. Because the old adage still holds true: Prevention is the best medicine.

Of course, prevention only works if it's timely — and unfortunately, most people are behind on their preventive care. In fact, nearly 70% of U.S. adults report being behind on at least one recommended preventive care screening.¹

There are many factors that contribute to this problem, including lack of information. But no matter the cause, forgoing preventive care can lead to negative consequences for your employees and your organization.

Keep reading to learn why preventive care is so helpful for employees and employers. Then share the chart below with your staff to arm them with the information they need to seek out the most important screenings.

The importance of preventive health care: Why it's the best medicine

Preventive care saves and extends lives. Health screenings and primary care consultations are found to significantly increase life expectancy, especially among 30- to 49-year-olds. Routine cardiovascular exams alone save tens of thousands of lives every year.²

Preventive care saves money, too, for employers and employees alike. For example, health-related productivity issues cost employers \$530 billion per year.³ That's why it's in an employer's best interest to prioritize their employees' health and encourage them to pursue preventive care.

This approach to care, including leading a healthy lifestyle and going for regular wellness visits and screenings, can help catch precursors to disease early on, before symptoms even develop. That can make it easier to prevent serious diseases (or keep them from worsening, if detected early), which in turn means that employers and employees spend less on health care.

How to practice proper preventive care

Preventive care works — but only if you do it. And according to the most recent data from the federal Healthy People 2030 initiative, only 5.3% of U.S. adults age 35 and older have received all recommended high-priority clinical preventive services.⁴ So, in addition to providing benefits packages that make screenings and other preventive care financially accessible, businesses should urge their employees to stay on top of their preventive care schedule.

Sharing the following chart is a great place to start.



Preventive Care Schedule

Preventive care for _____	Why it's important	What it entails	When to do it
Heart disease	Heart disease has been the leading cause of death in the U.S. since 1950. ⁵	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key screenings for blood pressure, cholesterol, blood glucose and body mass index (BMI)⁶ • Treatment plans for any conditions that increase the risk of heart disease, such as diabetes⁷ • Ankle brachial index test⁸ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These screenings happen at routine physical exams, which should be done yearly no matter your age.⁶ • The ankle brachial index test and treatment plans for conditions that increase the risk of heart disease should be done as recommended by a doctor.
Cancer	About 40% of men and women will be diagnosed with cancer at some point. ⁹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screenings for different types of cancer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cancer screenings are broadly recommended starting at age 25, depending on the type of cancer and screening.¹⁰ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Follow the American Cancer Society's guidelines for when to get screened for different types of cancer. ◦ Consult a primary care physician about the best timing for your screenings based on your age, family medical history and other risk factors.
Chronic lung disease	Over 35 million people in the U.S. have a chronic lung disease, ¹¹ and smoking isn't always the cause. For example, 1 in 4 people with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease have never smoked. ¹²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pulmonary function tests¹³ • Staying up to date on vaccinations that protect against respiratory viruses¹² 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screening should be done every year. Vaccinations can be ordered at your annual physical, where health care professionals can also order pulmonary function tests if you show warning signs of or have risk factors for lung disease.¹³
Stroke	Someone in the U.S. has a stroke every 40 seconds, and someone dies of a stroke every 3 minutes and 11 seconds. ¹⁴ However, 80% of strokes are preventable. ¹⁵	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key screenings for blood pressure, cholesterol, blood glucose and BMI⁶ • Additional heart health tests and screenings, including the ankle brachial test,⁸ as necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These screenings happen at routine physical exams, which should be done yearly.⁶ • Additional tests and screenings should take place as recommended by a doctor.

Want to combine this information with benefits that make preventive care more financially accessible for your employees? Contact your Aflac benefits advisor or visits [Aflac.com/business](https://www.aflac.com/business).



- ¹ Prevent Cancer Foundation. "U.S. adults are still behind on routine cancer screenings—but reasons why vary by race." Published 4.1.2024. [Accessed 9.16.2024.](#)
- ² PublicHealth.org. "Preventive Care." [Accessed 9.10.2024.](#)
- ³ Association of Health Care Journalists. "Poor Health Costs US Employers \$530 Billion and 1.4 Billion Work Days of Absence and Impaired Performance." [Accessed 9.10.2024.](#)
- ⁴ Healthy People 2030. "Increase the proportion of adults who get recommended evidence-based preventive health care — AHS-08." [Accessed 9.16.2024.](#)
- ⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Heart Disease Deaths." Reviewed 8.5.2024. [Accessed 9.12.2024.](#)
- ⁶ American Heart Association. "Heart-Health Screenings." Reviewed 1.16.2024. [Accessed 9.12.2024.](#)
- ⁷ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Heart Disease Risk Factors." Published 5.15.2024. [Accessed 9.12.2024.](#)
- ⁸ WebMD. "Ankle-Brachial Index (ABI) Test." Reviewed 2.12.2024. [Accessed 9.12.2024.](#)
- ⁹ National Cancer Institute. "Cancer Statistics." Updated 5.9.2024. [Accessed 9.16.2024.](#)
- ¹⁰ American Cancer Society. "Cancer screening saves lives." Published 2023. [Accessed 9.12.2024.](#)
- ¹¹ American Lung Association. "Our Impact." Updated 9.16.2024. [Accessed 9.17.2024.](#)
- ¹² American Lung Association. "COPD Causes and Risk Factors." Updated 6.7.2024. [Accessed 9.12.2024.](#)
- ¹³ American Lung Association. "Pulmonary Function Tests." Updated 7.22.2024. [Accessed 9.12.2024.](#)
- ¹⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Stroke Facts." Published 5.15.2024. [Accessed 9.12.2024.](#)
- ¹⁵ American Stroke Association. "Prevention." [Accessed 9.12.2024.](#)

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