

Healthy Living Message

Get Recommended Screening Tests & Immunizations

This information is for clinical staff to share with the Veteran.

Key Message for Veterans: Get recommended preventive services including screening tests and immunizations. Recommendations for preventive services depend on your age, gender, health status, and family history. Find out which screening tests and immunizations are recommended for you!

Expanded Message for Veterans:

- Every person is different. Refer to the websites below to see which preventive services are recommended for you, based on your age, gender, health status, and family history. Talk with your health care team about the recommendations that are right for you.
- Most veterans, regardless of age, gender, health status and family history, should be screened for alcohol abuse, depression, high blood pressure, HIV, military sexual trauma, obesity, PTSD, and tobacco use. Most veterans should receive a flu shot every year and a tetanus shot once every 10 years.
- If you are a woman who is considering pregnancy, it is important to check with your health care team to be sure you are up-to-date with immunizations.
- All preventive services have pros and cons. Depending on your preferences, you may wish to receive additional, fewer, or different services from those that are recommended.

Message Delivery by Clinical Staff:

During Face to Face Encounters:

- Share this information with patients in the course of providing primary care.
- Discuss and review results of the VHA online Health Risk Assessment (under development) during a clinical visit.
- Discuss during any clinical or patient education encounter (individual or group) if information is requested by Veteran.

At the Facility Level:

- Participate in mass media campaigns (posters, etc.) to increase general awareness and importance of getting recommended screenings and immunizations.
- Participate in medical center, VISN, and national outreach events to increase general awareness.



Who should receive a specific preventive service and when to start and stop delivering it?

- Refer to NCP Clinical Preventive Services Web pages for VA-specific guidance on individual clinical preventive services.
http://vaww.prevention.va.gov/Guidance_on_Clinical_Preventive_Services.asp
- If VA specific guidance is not yet available, refer to:
 - U.S. Preventive Services Task Force for recommended screening tests, counseling and preventive medications (<http://www.ahrq.gov/clinic/cps3dix.htm>*)
 - CDC for recommended immunizations (<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/schedules/adult-schedule.htm>*)
- Guidelines for the delivery of many preventive services include consideration of the patient's family history, medical conditions and other risk factors. Patient specific factors as well as the guidelines themselves may change over time.
- Preventive services are generally no longer indicated for patients with a terminal illness and/or under hospice care. Providers should discuss whether to continue preventive services with patients of all ages who, although not terminally ill, have a limited life expectancy and are unlikely to benefit from continued screening/counseling/immunizations/preventive medications or those who would be unable to tolerate further diagnostic work-up and/or treatment due to severe co-morbidities.

Important Considerations:

If a Veteran needs more intensive intervention in this area than the clinical staff member delivering the message is able to provide, the staff member should refer the Veteran to the appropriate clinical staff, clinic or program for further education or clinical care, following local referral/consult protocol.

Clinical Staff Tools: *(Staff may also benefit by reviewing the Veteran Tools listed in the next section).*

- NCP Clinical Preventive Services Web pages:
http://vaww.prevention.va.gov/Guidance_on_Clinical_Preventive_Services.asp
- U.S. Preventive Services Task Force for recommended screening tests, counseling and preventive medications
(<http://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/recommendations.htm>*)
- CDC for recommended immunizations
(<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/schedules/adult-schedule.htm>*)
- CDC Posters on Immunizations and Vaccines:
<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/posters.htm>*
- Immunization Action Coalition: <http://www.immunize.org/>*
- National Commission on Prevention Priorities
(<http://www.prevent.org/Initiatives/National-Commission-on-Prevention-Priorities.aspx>*)



Veteran Tools:

- Men Stay Healthy at 50+ : <http://www.ahrq.gov/ppip/men50.htm>*
- Women Stay Healthy at 50+ : <http://www.ahrq.gov/ppip/women50.htm>*
- Men Stay Healthy at Any Age : <http://www.ahrq.gov/ppip/healthymen.htm>*
- Women Stay Healthy at Any Age : <http://www.ahrq.gov/ppip/healthywom.htm>*
- Adult vaccination screening form:
http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/schedules/downloads/adult/adult_vac_scrn_gen.pdf*
- “My Healthfinder”: <http://www.healthfinder.gov/prevention/myHealthfinder.aspx>*
- Health Risk Assessment (under development) will be available to Veterans as an on-line tool in My HealthVet
- Healthfinder: Get Screened <http://www.healthfinder.gov/prevention/> * (Enter your information in the **my** healthfinder box and click on **Get Started**).

* Indicates that the link leads to a non-VA website. The VA is not responsible for the content that is on the site.

Supporting Information:

Definitions:

- Clinical Preventive Service: A service delivered in the clinical setting for the primary prevention of disease, or for the early detection of disease in persons with no symptoms of the target condition, with the goal of preventing or minimizing future morbidity and mortality. Clinical preventive services typically include: screening tests (for infectious diseases; cancers; heart and vascular diseases; injury and violence; mental health conditions and substance abuse; metabolic, nutritional, endocrine, musculoskeletal, obstetric, and gynecological conditions; and vision disorders), immunizations, health behavior counseling, and preventive medications.
- Screening: An examination or testing of a person with no symptoms of the target condition to detect disease at an early stage when treatment may be more effective, or to detect risk factors for disease or injury.
- Health Behavior Counseling: A variety of individualized communication techniques and strategies used by health professionals to engage patients in the process of making health behavior changes to prevent disease, promote health, and enhance the quality of life.
- Immunization: The administration of vaccines, toxoids, or immunoglobulins with the goal of protecting susceptible patients from vaccine-preventable diseases.
- Preventive medications, substances, or devices: Drug products or other substances used by a person who is not known to have the target condition, with the goal of preventing future morbidity and mortality. This includes selected prevention supplies or commodities, such as condoms.



Evidence and/or Guidelines:

- US Preventive Services Task Force recommendations:
<http://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org>^{*1-4}
- Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommendations:
<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/ACIP-list.htm#vacc>*

VHA Guidance:

- Handbook 1120.05 Coordination and Development of Clinical Preventive Services (10-13-09): http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=2095

VHA Program Office Stakeholders:

- Office of Public Health and Environmental Hazards
- Primary Care Services
- Specialty Care Services
- Pharmacy Benefits Management Service
- National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention
- Office of Nursing

VHA Content Experts:

- National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention

Source Documents:

1. Men: Stay Healthy at 50+- Checklists for Your Health. *AHRQ* 2008;
<http://www.ahrq.gov/ppip/men50.htm>, 08-IP002.
2. Women: Stay Healthy at 50+-Checklists for Your Health. *AHRQ* 2008;
<http://www.ahrq.gov/ppip/women50.htm>, 08-IP001.
3. Men: Stay Healthy at Any Age- Your Checklist for Health. *AHRQ* 2007;
<http://www.ahrq.gov/ppip/healthymen.htm>, 07-IP006-A.
4. Women: Stay Healthy at Any Age- Your Checklist for Health. *AHRQ* 2007;
<http://www.ahrq.gov/ppip/healthywom.htm>, 07-IP005-A.

