



What is preventive health care

Introduction

Many things can

- support people to be healthy
- or make it harder for people to be healthy.

For example, it can be harder for people to be healthy if they:

- do not have a healthy weight. A healthy weight is different for everyone.
- do not protect themselves when they are in the sun. You might protect yourself by wearing sunscreen, a hat, clothes that cover your body and sitting in the shade
- drink lots of alcohol
- use illegal drugs.

Illegal drugs are substances that:

- can hurt you
- the Law says you should not have. Laws are a set of rules that everyone must follow.

People can also be supported to be healthy by:

- eating a balanced diet
- moving their bodies
- doing things that protect them from infection. This might be washing their hands often and wearing a face mask
- not using tobacco.

Tobacco is a chemical that is in:

- cigarettes
- cigars
- chewing tobacco
- e-cigarettes.

Tobacco use is when people use these things.

Preventive health care is something that can support people to be healthy. Preventive health care are things that support people to stay healthy and get better quickly when they are sick or injured.

There are different types of preventive health care. Some types of preventive health care support people to:

- stay healthy
- get health checks
- get better faster or not get worse when they are already sick or injured.

Different people can provide these types of preventive health care. This could be provided by

- yourself
- your GP. Your GP is your regular doctor
- other people or organisations.

This document has information about

- different types of preventive health care
- who can provide this care to you.

Types of preventive health care to stay healthy

To stay healthy, there are things:

- you could do yourself
- your GP could do
- other people and organisations can do.

Things you could do yourself

Food

Eating food that is good for you. To eat food that is good for you, you might eat:

- a diet recommended to you by your doctor
- different types of food, e.g., you might eat vegetables, fruits, and proteins like meat or tofu
- fast food or food from packets like chips and ice-cream, only sometimes.

Moving your body

Moving your body can look different for different people. Some people are able to move their body and exercise. Some people need support to do these things. To move your body, you might:

- get support to swim
- play sport
- ride a bike that is made to suit you
- go to the gym.

Mental wellbeing

Mental wellbeing is when you:

- feel OK about having different kinds of feelings
- can cope with stress
- have people who can support you
- can do everyday things
- can do activities you want to do.

To look after your mental wellbeing, you might:

- do things you enjoy
- support your community, e.g., helping in beach clean-ups
- look after yourself, e.g., listen to music.

Social wellbeing

Social wellbeing is when you have and can keep good relationships with others. A relationship is a way that two or more people are joined by something in their lives. People can be joined by something they share or have in common. For example, you might have a relationship with:

- your friends
- your family
- your partner
- people you work with.

Relationships can look different for everyone. To look after your social wellbeing, you might:

- call or visit family and friends
- join a group in your community.

Cultural wellbeing

Many people have strong connections to their:

- culture
- community
- land. Land describes a place you might feel a connection to because it is where your family came from.
- spirituality. Spirituality is a way of understanding life and connecting with others. Spirituality can provide a sense of meaning. A sense of meaning gives us a feeling that we are part of something, and life is useful and valuable.

Cultural wellbeing is when your connections to these things is strong.

Alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs

Some people drink alcohol, use tobacco or illegal drugs. To stay healthy, you might have less or none of these things. For example, if you drink lots of alcohol, you might try to drink one or two drinks a week instead.

Sun safety

It is important to get sunlight to stay healthy. But too much sunlight can hurt your body. Sun safety is when you protect yourself from getting hurt from the sun. To be sun safe, you might:

- wear a hat
- put on clothes that cover your skin
- wear sunscreen that is SPF30+ or more
- try to sit in the shade or under shelter
- wear sunglasses.

Learning about how to stay healthy

To learn more about how to stay healthy, you might:

- ask your GP for information.
- look for information online, e.g., CID has some Easy Read health fact sheets. To find out more, go to www.cid.org.au/our-health-fact-sheets

Mouth

To look after the health of your mouth, you might:

- brush your teeth two times a day
- floss your teeth two times a day
- drink less or no soft drinks
- go to the dentist two times a year.

A dentist is a doctor who supports you in keeping your teeth and mouth healthy.

Staying healthy from infectious diseases

Infectious diseases are a type of sickness. For example, COVID-19 is an infectious disease.

To stay healthy from infectious diseases, you might:

- wash your hands often
- wear a face mask when you are inside with lots of people
- not share your food or drinks with other people
- look after your sexual health.

Sexual health is about keeping safe before, during and after sex.

To find out more about sex and sexual health, you can go to:

- NSW Family planning Easy Read Factsheets www.fpnsw.org.au/factsheets/individuals/disability/all-about-sex
- Easy Read leaflets from the UK www.icash.nhs.uk/contraception-sexual-health/easy-read-leaflets

Things my GP does

Regular check-ups at the GP can help you to stay healthy. Your GP can do certain health checks. To find out more go to, www.cid.org.au/resource/yearly-health-check-fact-sheet/.

Your GP might support you to stay healthy by doing some of the things listed below.

Talk to you

A GP might ask questions about your life to find out more about your

- mental wellbeing
- social wellbeing
- cultural wellbeing
- physical wellbeing

- sexual health
- history.

Physical wellbeing is when your body functions at the right age for you. Your history are things that have happened in the past. Your GP might ask about your medical history or family history. Your medical history is about any big injuries or sicknesses you have had in the past, e.g., if you had a fall. Family history is about any big sicknesses that your family might have had, e.g., if one of your parents has had a heart attack before. It might also be a sickness someone in your family has right now, e.g., one of your grandparents has cancer. Knowing your history helps your GP to support you to stay healthy.

Your GP might also give you information or ideas about how you can stay healthy.

Blood pressure

Blood pressure is how strong your heart can move blood around your body. Blood pressure can tell a doctor important information about your:

- heart health
- how blood moves in your body.

To check your blood pressure, your GP will wrap your arm above your elbow with a cuff. This cuff will:

- get tight and squeeze your arm
- then slowly loosen.

Your GP will be able to find out your blood pressure from a machine or dial connected to the cuff.

Blood tests

Your blood can tell your doctors information about your health. To check your blood, your GP will ask you to do a blood test. You can ask your GP for one too.

To do a blood test, a worker who knows a lot about taking blood:

- takes some of your blood with a needle
- sends your blood to a place where they can look at your blood closely

Your blood test results are sent to your GP.

Immunisation

Immunisation is the way the body learns how to fight a disease. Immunisation is what happens when a person gets better from an infection or gets a vaccine. A vaccine is a medicine that helps people to get immunised. Medicine is sometimes called medication or drugs. Medicine can be in:

- a tablet
- a pill
- a drink
- an injection.

Vaccines are an injection that is mostly given in your arm. Vaccines are usually for one or more types of disease. You might get vaccinated by your GP or another health worker, e.g., your GP might have given you a COVID-19 vaccine.

Other things that can support you to stay healthy

Sometimes the government or organisations try to do things to make it easier for people to stay healthy. The government is a group of people who control and help organise things to protect and support people in a certain area.

For example, the government or organisations might make:

- information sheets, ads on TV or apps to help people to stay healthy, e.g., posters with information on how to wash your hands right
- it easier to exercise, e.g., the organisation you work at might exercise before lunch together
- it harder to use tobacco by not letting people smoke in certain areas.

Types of health checks

Getting health checks can support you to get the right help to find out if you are sick early and stop you from getting worse. Some health checks:

- you could do yourself
- your GP could do
- other people or organisations can do

There are different types of tests for different types of sicknesses. These tests find out if:

- anything has changed in your body
- your body is doing things it does not normally do

Some tests are done with machines. Some checks are done with hands. For tests done with hands, you can ask your GP to:

- do this type of check
- show you how to do it.

Things you could do yourself

Cancer screening

Cancer screening are tests to check if a person has cancer. There are different types of tests for different types of cancer. Some examples of common checks are checks of breasts and testicles. Breasts are sometimes called boobs. Testicles are sometimes called balls.

These checks might look for changes in:

- shape
- colour
- size
- feeling.

You or your GP can do these checks. You can ask your GP to show how to do a check. If you notice anything change, you should see your GP.

To find out more about these checks, go to the CIDs factsheet about types of health checks, www.cid.org.au/resource/types-of-health-checks-fact-sheet/

Another common type of check is a skin check. A mole is a small, dark mark on your skin. Moles are normally round in shape. Many people have moles. Some moles change as we get older. Some changes are OK. Some changes might mean you have cancer. This is why it is important to do skin checks. A skin check looks for changes in your moles:

- shape
- colour
- size
- feeling, e.g., it feels rough or dry when you touch it.

To find out more about mole checks go to the Cancer Council www.cancer.org.au/cancer-information/causes-and-prevention/sun-safety/check-for-signs-of-skin-cancer

Things your GP could do

Cancer screening

Some cancer screening tests can be done by your GP. Your GP might also send you to get a test somewhere else to do a cancer screen. Some examples of common cancer screens are a:

- cervical screening test
- mammogram
- prostate screening test.

A cervical screening test is when a doctor like your GP checks your cervix for a:

- type of cancer called cervical cancer
- a sexually transmitted disease.

Your cervix is inside your body. It is above your vagina. To find out more, go to:

www.fpnsw.org.au/justchecking/easyenglish.

Your GP might send you somewhere to get a mammogram. A mammogram is a machine that checks your breasts for cancer. This test is mostly done by someone who knows a lot about different types of scans. A scan takes pictures of the inside of your body. To find out more, go to www.fpnsw.org.au/justchecking/easyenglish.

There are different types of prostate screening tests. For example, a blood test and a test called a digital rectal examination. This test is done by your doctor. This test is mostly done by a specialist doctor called a urologist. A urologist is a doctor who knows a lot about the body parts that make, hold, and remove urine from the body. Urine is sometimes called wee.

Tests for your heart health

There are some tests that let your GP know that you might have a heart health problem. For example:

- blood tests
- blood pressure
- scans, e.g., a CT scan 3D pictures of a part of your body.

Tests for your sexual health

Sexual health is about staying safe before, during and after sex. The tests for sexual health look for sexually transmitted diseases.

Sexually transmitted diseases are sometimes called STDs. There are different types of STDs, e.g., HIV and Chlamydia.

To find out more about sex, STDs, and sexual health, go to:

- NSW Family planning Easy Read Factsheets
www.fpnsw.org.au/factsheets/individuals/disability/all-about-sex
- Easy Read leaflets from the UK www.icash.nhs.uk/contraception-sexual-health/easy-read-leaflets

Tests for your bones

As people get older their bones can become weak. Weak bones can be hurt more easily. Your GP might want to find out if you have weak bones so they can help you avoid bad injuries. To find out if you have weak bones your GP might ask you to do a heel ultrasound. A heel ultrasound is a machine that looks at how strong your bones are.

Other health checks that can support you

You might go to a specialist. Specialists are people who know a lot about a certain area, e.g., an audiologist or optometrist. An audiologist looks after the health of your hearing and ears. An audiologist might give you hearing aids. An optometrist looks after the health of your eyes. An optometrist might give your glasses.

You might get a cancer screen sent to your home in the mail. For example, bowel screening tests are sent to Australians after they turn 50. Bowels are inside your tummy. They are sometimes called your guts. Your bowels makes your poo. Bowel screening tests your poo to find out if you have bowel cancer. To find out more, go to, www.fpnsw.org.au/justchecking/easyenglish

Types of preventive health care to do if you are sick or injured

When you are sick or injured, there are things you can do so you get better quickly or so you do not get worse. Some of these things:

- you could do yourself
- your GP could do
- other people can do

Things you could do yourself

- If you are sick or injured, you can protect yourself from getting worse by following the doctor's instructions.
- Keep a healthy weight. A healthy weight is different for everyone. It is important to talk to your doctor to learn what is healthy for you.
- Eat a balanced diet.
- Drink two litres of water a day. Two litres is about eight glasses of water a day.
- If you have mental health problem, it is important to let someone know if you think you start to feel worse.
- Ask for help if you think you need it.

Things your GP could do

If you are sick or injured, your GP might support you to:

- keep track of your medication
- do exercises to help you recover
- manage your sickness or injury. For example, your GP can help you with your mental health. They can make you a mental health plan. A mental health plan is a list of things you and other people can do to help you get better. It is sometimes called a treatment plan
- find other doctors who can also help you.

Other things that can support you if you are already sick or injured

You might go to a specialist. For example, a mental health professional like a psychologist or psychiatrist. A psychologist helps you with your mental health by talking with you. Psychologists help you find things you can do to feel better. A psychiatrist is a doctor who helps people with their mental health using talking and medicine.

Title

Preventive health care

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Description of resource

This document provides information about:

- different types of preventive health care
- who can provide this care.

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