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Medical Exams & Tests

Having a Routine Checkup

A routine physical exam from a doctor or health care provider helps you find out about the state of your health. It allows you to ask questions. It also helps you find out if you have a health problem you don't know about. Some diseases, such as high blood pressure, may have no symptoms. Some cancers have no symptoms in the early stages. Tests can be given to help detect these. Check the chart on page 8 for when certain health tests are recommended.

Basic Parts of a Checkup

- A complete medical history (questions on family health history, previous illnesses, emotional well-being, etc.)
- A check on how well body organs are functioning (eyes, ears, heart, skin, bowels, etc.)
- Checking the vital signs (blood pressure, pulse, breathing rate, temperature)
- Actual body examination (listening, thumping and looking at specific body parts)
- Routine diagnostic tests (blood tests, X-rays, etc.)
- A check of specific health concerns



During a checkup, discuss your health concerns with your doctor.

Tests & What They Are For

Blood Pressure Test – Checks the force of blood against the artery walls. The first or top number (systolic pressure) measures the force when the heart beats. The second or bottom number (diastolic pressure) measures the force between heartbeats when the heart is being refilled. High blood pressure may have no symptoms. It can lead to a heart attack and/or a stroke.

Chlamydia Screening – Checks for chlamydia bacteria, which is transmitted sexually

Cholesterol Blood Test – Checks the levels of fatty deposits (cholesterol) in the blood. High LDL-cholesterol levels are linked to heart disease.

Colorectal Screening – Checks for early signs of colon and rectal problems, including cancer

Diabetes Screening – Checks for normal and abnormal blood sugar levels

Digital Rectal Exam – Checks for early signs of colon, rectal, and/or prostate problems, including cancer

Glaucoma Screening – Checks for increased pressure within the eye. Glaucoma can result in blindness if it is not treated.

Mammogram – An X-ray to detect breast problems

Osteoporosis Screening – Measures bone density to predict the risk for fractures

Pap Test – Checks for early signs of cervical cancer

Professional Breast Exam – A health care provider examines the breasts for signs of problems.

Health Tests & When to Have Them

Health Test	Ages 20–29	Ages 30–39	Ages 40–49	Age 50 and older
Regular Dental Checkup	Every 6–12 months			
Physical Exam	Every 5 years	Every 2–4 years		Every 1–2 years
Blood Pressure	At every office visit or at least every 2 years			
Vision	Every 5 years	Every 2–4 years		Every 1–2 years age 65+
Cholesterol Blood Test	Every 5 years or as advised (e.g., yearly if elevated)			
Pap Test ¹	At least every 3 years. As advised after age 65.			
Mammogram ²	W O M E N	Every 1–2 years as advised		
Breast Self-Exam*		Discuss with doctor		
Chlamydia Screening ³		Discuss with doctor		
Professional Breast Exam		Every 3 years		Every year
Osteoporosis Screening		Starting at age 65 (60 for women at increased risk for fractures) as often as advised		
Testicular Self-Exam*	M E N	Discuss with doctor		
Prostate Cancer Screening				Discuss with doctor
Colorectal Cancer Screening ⁴				Discuss with doctor
Glaucoma Screening ⁵				Every 2–3 years

Note: These are general guidelines. If you are at an increased risk for any illness, tests may need to be done sooner or more often. Extra tests (e.g., [diabetes screening](#)) may also be needed. Follow your doctor’s advice.

1. Pap tests should begin within 3 years of the onset of sexual activity or age 21 (whichever comes first).
2. Women who are at a higher risk for breast cancer should seek expert medical advice about getting a mammogram before age 40 and how often to get mammograms after age 40.
3. All sexually active females aged 25 or younger and females older than age 25 who: Have more than one sexual partner (or a partner who is not monogamous); have had an STD in the past; or who do not use condoms consistently and correctly, should have routine chlamydia screenings as often as advised by their doctors.
4. Screening test options include stool blood test, sigmoidoscopy, double contrast barium enema, and colonoscopy. How often testing is done depends on the test(s) given.
5. For African Americans, screening should begin every 2 to 3 years between the ages of 40 and 49.

*Ask your doctor or call 800.4.CANCER (422.6237) for a step-by-step self-exam guide. Also, though rare, men can get breast cancer too, and should look for and report a breast lump or other change to their doctor.

Immunization Schedule

Age ▶ Vaccine¹ ▼	Birth	1 mon	2 mos	4 mos	6 mos	12 mos	15 mos	18 mos	24 mos	4–6 yrs	11–12 yrs	13–18 yrs
Hepatitis B²	Hep B-1	Only if mother is HBsAg (-)										
		HepB-2			HepB-3			HepB Series²				
Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis³			DTaP	DTaP	DTaP		DTaP			DTaP	Td³	Td²³
Haemophilus influenzae type b⁴			Hib	Hib	Hib	Hib						
Inactivated Poliovirus			IPV	IPV		IPV				IPV		
Pneumococcal⁵			PCV	PCV	PCV	PCV			PCV⁵			
Measles, Mumps, Rubella⁶						MMR-1				MMR-2⁶	MMR-2⁶	
Varicella⁷						Var			Var²,⁷			
Hepatitis A⁸									Hepatitis A Series⁸			
Influenza						Yearly			As advised			

1. For updates and more information, contact CDC Immunization Hotline at 800.232.2522 (English) or 800.232.0233 (Spanish) or www.cdc.gov/nip. Ask your child's doctor what vaccine's your child needs. For information on smallpox, contact the CDC at 888.246.2675 (English); 888.246.2857 (Spanish); or www.bt.cdc.gov.
2. Catch-up (make-up) vaccines should be given to children and teenagers who have not already had them.
3. Td (tetanus and diphtheria) is advised at 11 to 12 years of age and Td boosters every 10 years.
4. There are 3 brands of Hib vaccines. With one brand, the 6 month dose is not given.
5. PCV vaccine protects against meningitis and some pneumonias. All children 2 to 23 months of age and certain children 24 to 59 months of age need it. PPV vaccine may be needed in addition to PCV vaccine for certain high-risk groups between 24 months and 5 years of age. Check with your child's doctor.
6. The 2nd MMR dose should be given at or by 4 to 6 years of age or by 11 to 12 years of age.
7. Your child may need 2 doses of Var vaccine.
8. Hepatitis A vaccine should be given to persons in selected states and/or regions. Check with your doctor or local health department.
9. Follow your doctor's advice for flu and pneumonia vaccines.

[Note: College students may need a vaccine for meningitis. Adults may need additional vaccines. Ask your doctor.]

Adult Immunizations		
Td³	Influenza Vaccine⁹	Pneumococcal Vaccine⁹
Every 10 years after 11-18 years of age	Annually at age 50 and older or as advised	Once at 65 years

Fever

Fever is one way the body fights an infection or illness. It helps speed up the body's defense actions by increasing blood flow.

Normal body temperature ranges from 97°F to 100°F.

Signs & Symptoms

- Temperature higher than 100°F by mouth or ear; higher than 101°F by rectum
- The skin feels warm. Sweat.

Use a digital or ear thermometer to measure body temperature. Don't use a glass mercury thermometer. If it breaks, droplets of toxic mercury can be released. Call the health department and your doctor if this happens.

Temperatures are more accurate when they are tested inside the body, such as by mouth or rectum.

Causes

Fever is usually a sign of another problem, such as an infection.

Body temperature changes throughout the day. It is usually lowest in the morning and highest in the late afternoon and evening. Other factors that can affect your temperature reading include:

- Wearing too much clothing, if you're overdressed enough to raise your body temperature
- Exercise
- Hot, humid weather
- Taking your temperature by mouth after you drink a hot liquid like tea can also raise your temperature.

Treatment

If having a fever causes you no harm or discomfort and you have no other medical problems, you may not need to treat the fever. If the fever makes you uncomfortable, is 104°F or higher, or if you are frail or have a medical condition, you should treat it.

Treatment includes self-care and treating the cause (e.g., taking an antibiotic for a bacterial infection).



Don't use a glass mercury thermometer like the one shown here.

Questions to Ask

Does an infant or child up to 3 years old have any of these problems?

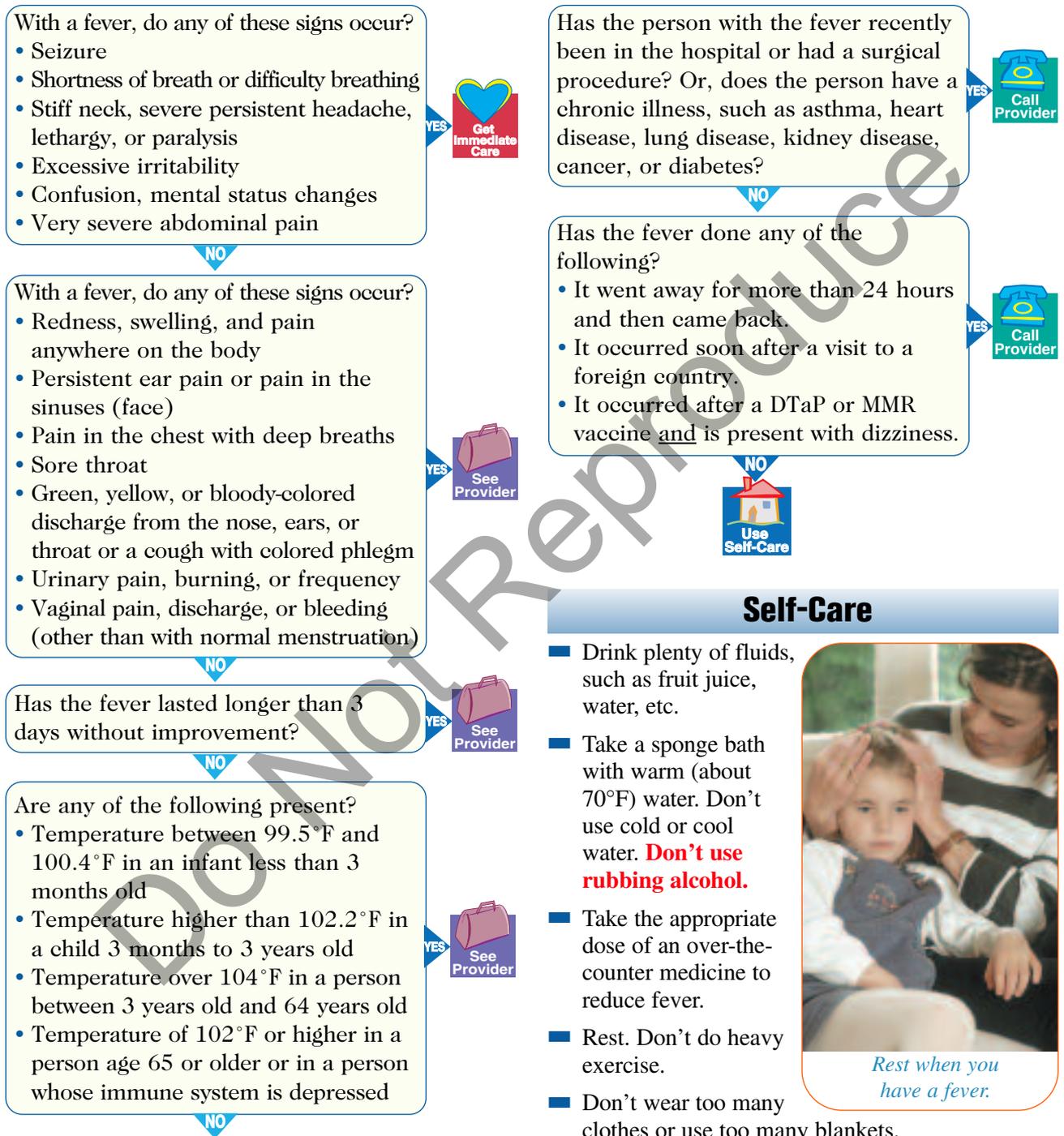
- Temperature of 100.4°F or higher in a baby less than 3 months old
- Temperature of 104°F or higher in a child between 3 months and 3 years old
- A fever along with inconsolable crying

NO

YES

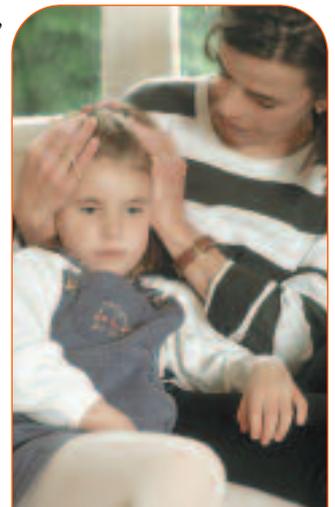


Flowchart continued on next page



Self-Care

- Drink plenty of fluids, such as fruit juice, water, etc.
- Take a sponge bath with warm (about 70°F) water. Don't use cold or cool water. **Don't use rubbing alcohol.**
- Take the appropriate dose of an over-the-counter medicine to reduce fever.
- Rest. Don't do heavy exercise.
- Don't wear too many clothes or use too many blankets.



Rest when you have a fever.

Flowchart continued in next column