

**Narrator**

When high school Principal Everette Johnson turned 50, a medical screening test found the early stages of colon cancer.

**Everette Johnson, Patient**

"I was thrown for a loop to be honest with you, because I was totally healthy at the time."

**Narrator**

A surgeon removed the malignancy and Everette made a rapid recovery. Cancer-free, he went back to work a month later without requiring any additional treatment.

Everette's experience illustrates a medical truism: The sooner health problems are detected and diagnosed; the more likely it is that they can be cured or successfully managed. That's the reason why screening tests have been developed for several types of cancer, as well as diseases such as diabetes and heart disease.

Dr. Rick Kellerman, president of the American Academy of Family Physicians, says these routine medical screenings are an invaluable tool in keeping patients healthy.

**Rick Kellerman, MD/ American Academy of Family Physicians**

"There is no doubt that medical screening tests have had a positive impact on the health of Americans...We've cut the risk of stroke in the United State by over 50 percent just because we check blood pressure frequently...We very rarely see cervical cancer in women anymore because we frequently do Pap smears."

**Narrator**

Despite the clear benefits associated with early disease detection, only 1 in 3 older adults receive all recommended health screening measures.

***Natural Sound***

***"It may just be inflammation from something on the job sites, but what we're going to do is just check some general blood work."***

**Steven Schnur, MD/South Florida Cardiology**

"It is human nature. If you feel good, then everything is fine. If you go to see a doctor, God forbid they are going to find something is wrong. "

***Natural Sound***

***"Women 18 to 39."***

**Narrator**

Marti Spittel Ziegelbauer spent 20 years in radio and television broadcasting, mainly in Wisconsin and Minnesota. She had been relatively healthy all of her life, so when her career called, she responded like many of today's busy women.

**Marti Spittell Ziegelbauer, Patient**

"My life was all about my career and I made that a priority and my health came second."

**Narrator**

There came a point when this doctor's daughter couldn't ignore her health any longer. At age 38, Marti was about to sign off the air for the last time and move on to a television consulting career. On that very day, she developed severe bleeding and had to see a doctor immediately.

**Marti Spittell Ziegelbauer, Patient**

"Imagine your legs are up in stirrups, because they are, and there's a sheet over your legs and you hear a physician beneath you saying we need to stop this exam because the tumor in your cervix is too large.

I took a deep breath just like that and I asked him, 'Did you say tumor?'"

**Narrator**

Next we'll learn more about Marti's treatment – and how a routine test could have detected her disease before it became a life-threatening medical crisis. We'll also see how other screening tests are helping more and more patients beat cancer.

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**On screen title graphic: Cancer**

***Natural Sound***

***" Five years ago I was diagnosed with a form of reproductive cancer, late stage, level 3."***

**Narrator**

After being diagnosed with advanced cervical cancer Marti had to have surgery right away.

**Marti Spittell Ziegelbauer, Patient**

"It was at that moment it hit me that all these things about my job that I thought were so important in developing this career really meant nothing at all."

**Narrator**

Fortunately her therapy for the disease was successful.

Today Marti works to raise money for – and awareness of – the importance of women's health screenings like Pap smears.

**Marti Spittell Ziegelbauer, Patient**

"Use me as an example if you have not had a visit to your doctor in the last year."

**Narrator**

The Pap smear has become the most widely used and successful cancer screening technique in medical history. It is credited with reducing cervical cancer death rates by more than 70 percent since World War II.

A Pap smear involves collecting a sample of cells from the cervix, which is part of a woman's uterus, during a pelvic exam. The cells are then checked for signs of abnormalities that could lead to cancer.

The American Academy of Family Physicians strongly recommends that women have a Pap smear at least every three years to screen for cervical cancer.

**Rick Kellerman, MD/ American Academy of Family Physicians**

"By doing Pap smears regularly, we have a chance to detect cervical cancer in an early stage and treat it appropriately."

**Narrator**

A vaccine to prevent cervical cancer also has been developed. The vaccine is approved by the FDA for use in females between 9 and 26 years of age.

***Natural Sound***

***"We want to make sure that you examine your breasts the week after your period."***

**Narrator**

In addition to regular screenings for cervical cancer, women age 40 and older should be screened for breast cancer with mammography every one to two years after counseling by their family physician regarding the potential risks and benefits of the procedure.

The second leading cause of cancer deaths in women, breast cancer kills more than 40,000 women. Every year.

But thanks to the widespread use of mammography, which involves examining the breast with low-dose x-rays, and the advent of new therapies, the odds of surviving this disease are improving.

**Rick Kellerman, MD/ American Academy of Family Physicians**

"If we can find breast cancer at a very early stage, we can cure breast cancer."

**Narrator**

There are also cancer screening tests that have been developed specifically for men.

The prostate is a walnut-sized gland below the bladder that secretes proteins found in semen. For reasons that are unknown, the prostate is prone to cancer.

**Gerald Chodak, MD/Midwest Prostate and Urology Health Center**

“Prostate cancer is very common. There are an estimated 12 million men walking around with prostate cancer...Any man really is at risk really for developing prostate cancer.”

**Narrator**

A blood analysis called a PSA test is used to screen for prostate cancer.

**Gerald Chodak, MD/Midwest Prostate and Urology Health Center**

“The PSA test is a measure of a protein called prostate specific antigen and that test can help tell us or alert us that a man may have prostate cancer.”

**Narrator**

In addition to the PSA test, physicians typically perform a digital rectal exam, where the size and locations of the prostate gland or abnormalities can be felt.

**Gerald Chodak, MD/Midwest Prostate and Urology Health Center**

“The digital rectal exam finds some cancers that are going to be missed by the blood test – the PSA test.”

**Narrator**

A number of effective prostate cancer treatments are available. These include surgery and different forms of radiation therapy.

**Gerald Chodak, MD/Midwest Prostate and Urology Health Center**

“Fortunately we can treat it quite well – particularly when we find it early.”

**Narrator**

The American Academy of Family Physicians suggests that men speak with their personal physicians about whether a PSA test is appropriate for them.

**Natural Sound**

*“ We have a peak flow of 12 cc's for per second.”*

**Narrator**

Testicular cancer is primarily a disease of younger men and is the most common cancer diagnosed in men between the ages of 15 and 35. But it is also among the most curable forms of cancer especially if it is found at an early stage. According to the American Cancer Society a testicular exam is an important part of a general physical check up. Men may also want to ask their doctors to teach them how to do a testicular self-exam.

For both men and women periodic screenings tests for skin cancer are available.

**Elizabeth Connelly, MD/University of Miami School of Medicine**

"Screenings are very important in skin cancer because for the most part skin cancer is preventable. And with screenings you can pick up either pre-cancers or early cancers and potentially be life-saving..."

**Narrator w/2D text graphics**

There are three main types of skin cancer:

- Basal cell carcinoma
- Squamous cell carcinoma (and)
- Melanoma – (the rarest but most deadly form of skin cancer)

**Narrator**

Sun exposure has been shown to cause skin cancer. So in addition to getting screened regularly, Dr. Connelly urges her patients to avoid outdoor activities during periods of peak sunlight. She also emphasizes the importance of using sun-screen products and wearing protective clothing such as long-sleeved shirts.

**Elizabeth Connelly, MD/University of Miami School of Medicine**

"Think of sun protection as a habit the way we think about brushing our teeth. Nobody thinks twice about brushing their teeth in the morning – they know they have to do it."

***Natural Sound***

***" Everything looks okay so we'll see you next year for another skin check.  
Thank you doctor.  
Bye bye"***

**Narrator**

Colon cancer doesn't discriminate between genders. It claims the lives of 56,000 men and women in the United States annually.

Medical experts say up to a third of these deaths could be prevented if all men and women age 50 and over were screened for colon cancer – also known as colorectal cancer - every one to 10 years depending on the test that their doctor uses.

**Narrator**

In a procedure called a colonoscopy, which is the most common screening test for colon cancer, a thin flexible instrument is used to examine the colon and rectum. The patient is mildly sedated but remains awake.

**Narrator**

Bill Campbell, the creative director at a North Carolina advertising agency, wasn't screened for colorectal cancer when he turned 50. But after enduring months of stomach pain and diarrhea, he finally went to the doctor.

## THE PATIENT CHANNEL PRESENTS: TESTS THAT CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE

A cancerous mass was found in Bill's rectum. His treatment regimen, which included repeated surgeries as well as chemotherapy and radiation therapy, was grueling but ultimately successful.

### **Bill Campbell, Patient**

"My most sincere piece of advice to anybody who has turned 50 is to get a colonoscopy...

If you don't and you end up with cancer, it is going to hurt. You'll come out of it philosophical perhaps – loving the world who loved you. Everybody takes care of you – everybody worries about you. But it is going to hurt. So I recommend getting that done... It won't be the most memorable experience you've ever had. But it will save your life – in a heartbeat."

### **Everette Johnson, Patient**

"Just don't say that I will do it tomorrow, I will do it the next month – because of time is of essence when you are dealing with a situation like this."

### **Narrator**

People with a family history of cancer should talk to their physician about being screened earlier than the general population. The same advice holds true for individuals with a history of other health problems.

### **Rick Kellerman, MD/ American Academy of Family Physicians**

"The most important thing is that you sit down with your family physician and determine exactly which medical screening tests are important and right for you."

### **Narrator**

Ahead we'll turn our attention to screening tests that are helping to lessen the toll of illnesses such as heart disease and diabetes.

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## **On screen title graphic: Heart Disease and Stroke**

### **Narrator**

In today's high-tech gadget-laden world, a simple blood pressure test is still one of the best medical screenings available.

### **Rick Kellerman, MD/ American Academy of Family Physicians**

"When you go to the doctor's office, they always check your blood pressure because if we can diagnose hypertension – high blood pressure – we can treat it appropriately and cut the risk of stroke and heart disease."

### **Steven Schnur, MD/South Florida Cardiology**

"Everyone should have their blood pressure checked starting in their 20's."

**Narrator**

Dr. Schnur also says this important task, which should be done at least once every two years, needs to be left to medical professionals.

**Steven Schnur, MD/South Florida Cardiology**

"You can have your blood pressure checked through pharmacies, through buying an ambulatory blood-pressure machine. The problem is that most of those machines are not that accurate and most individuals don't know how to properly do the test. So I would say yes it is important for a healthcare professional to perform the test. Whether that is a nurse, whether that is a physician's assistant, nurse practitioner or physician, it needs to be done by someone who knows how to do it and on proper equipment."

**Narrator**

If left unchecked, high blood pressure can be deadly over time.

**Steven Schnur, MD/South Florida Cardiology**

"It's a silent killer because it increases your risk for heart attacks, it increases your risk for stroke but you don't know that you have it."

**Narrator**

Most people can recall having their blood pressure taken. But do you know what the numbers mean?

**Steven Schnur, MD/South Florida Cardiology over video of blood pressure being taken**

"When you do somebody's blood pressure, you have a top number and you have a bottom number. The top number is called the systolic blood pressure and the bottom number is the diastolic blood pressure..."

When you listen with a stethoscope when the blood pressure is taken. As the cuff is deflated, the moment you start hearing sounds through the stethoscope it is considered the systolic blood pressure...At the time when your blood pressure is no longer audible, it is called your diastolic blood pressure...

So the ratio of the systolic over the diastolic is what we call the blood pressure measurement...Normal blood pressure is 120 over 80."

**Narrator**

If a patient has an elevated blood pressure, it can be cause for concern.

**Steven Schnur, MD/South Florida Cardiology**

"The higher the blood pressure, the less compliant your arteries are and the higher you are for risk of both heart disease and stroke."

***Natural Sound***

***"Hello, how are you? Good seeing you. You too."***

**Narrator**

In addition to getting their blood pressure checked, men and women should have regular cholesterol screenings. Because like high blood pressure, elevated cholesterol levels can silently cause serious damage.

**Steven Schnur, MD/South Florida Cardiology**

"High cholesterol not only leads to heart disease, to cerebral vascular disease but it leads to disease throughout the body because it is really a general condition so it needs to be paid extreme attention to and brought under control."

It is a routine blood test. We normally check good cholesterol, total cholesterol, bad cholesterol and we look at the ratios."

**Narrator**

Total cholesterol is broken down into the Good HDL cholesterol and the Bad LDL cholesterol. The levels of LDL and HDL are measured to evaluate the risk of having a heart attack. LDL cholesterol of less than 100 is considered optimal, and less than 130 is near optimal for most people. HDL, is called the good cholesterol because a high level –higher than 40 in men and 50 in women seems to protect against heart attack. In general, total cholesterol should be less than 200.

***Natural Sound***

***"Nothing really bothering you? Not recently."***

**Narrator**

The lack of symptoms associated with high cholesterol is one of the reasons that many people ignore this aspect of their health.

**Steven Schnur, MD/South Florida Cardiology**

"You can walk around with a very elevated cholesterol and not know it...If every time it went to 201 you got pain in the arm to the point where you couldn't move that arm, I guarantee you you'd would pay attention to high cholesterol."

**Narrator**

For patients with high blood pressure or high cholesterol, the initial treatment often revolves around lifestyle changes like better dietary management, weight loss and increased exercise. If necessary, there are also numerous medications that can be prescribed to help control blood pressure and cholesterol.

Regardless, the key is early detection.

**Steven Schnur, MD/South Florida Cardiology**

"The earlier you detect it, the more lives you save."

**Narrator**

The same early-detection principle applies to diabetes, an incurable and progressive metabolic disease that affects about 10 percent of the U.S. population.

People with diabetes have altered metabolisms that result in chronically elevated levels of blood sugar known as glucose. A blood-screening test can detect this disorder before symptoms appear. This test is recommended every three years for men and women starting at age 45.

**Rick Kellerman, MD/ American Academy of Family Physicians**

“The reason that we screen for blood glucose or blood sugar is to determine if a patient has diabetes – and you know that diabetes has a lot of complications.”

**Narrator**

Not every routine health screening involves blood work.

Doctors also can screen for a number of health problems during a routine physical. By feeling a patient’s neck, they can check for indications of thyroid disease and lymph gland disorders including cancer. Using a stethoscope to listen to the carotid arteries also can detect a potential risk for stroke.

Additionally, examining a patient’s feet and checking the pulse in the extremities can screen for peripheral arterial disease.

Dr. Kellerman, whose family practice is in Wichita, Kansas, also has his patients measured and weighed in order to calculate a body mass index.

**Rick Kellerman, MD/ American Academy of Family Physicians**

“We use that calculation to help counsel patients about the right foods to eat; the proper level of physical activity and in some cases the fact that they need to lose a little bit of weight.”

**Narrator**

Other recommended health screenings include regular visits to the dentist: twice a year, as well as periodic hearing tests and vision examinations that include checking for glaucoma.

In addition, women aged 65 and over should be screened for osteoporosis.

Coming up, we’ll learn why the guidelines for medical screenings tend to change and evolve over time.

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**Narrator**

The American Academy of Family Physicians has 94,000 members – physicians and medical students from all over the United States. As part of its mission to improve healthcare for all Americans, the academy issues guidelines for medical screenings.

**Rick Kellerman, MD/ American Academy of Family Physicians**

“We have a number of committees with physician experts who take the results of the most recent research and use it to evaluate and update medical screening guidelines.”

**Narrator w/2D graphics**

To recap some of the information in today’s program, here are some guidelines for medical screenings:

**Breast Cancer**

Women age 40 years and older should be screened for breast cancer with mammography every 1-2 years after counseling by their family physician regarding the potential risks and benefits of the procedure.

**Cervical Cancer**

A Pap smear should be completed at least every 3 years to screen for cervical cancer in women who have ever had sex and have a cervix. In women over age 30, an HPV DNA test can be used in combination with a Pap smear to screen for cervical cancer.

**Colon Cancer**

Men and women 50 years of age or older should be screened for colon cancer every one to 10 years depending on the test that their doctor uses.

**Diabetes**

Men and women 45 years of age or older should have a blood glucose test every three years.

**Hypertension**

Starting at age 20, adults should be screened for high blood pressure at least every two years.

**Osteoporosis**

Women aged 65 and older should be screened for osteoporosis.

**Prostate Cancer**

Beginning at age 50 men should speak with their physicians about whether the PSA test is appropriate for them.

### **Family History**

These guidelines are for people who don't have a family history or hereditary risks for the condition. If you have a family history you may need earlier screening. Check with your personal physician.

While medical screening tests are certainly useful, Dr. Kellerman and other experts stress that this doctor patient relationship is equally important.

### **Rick Kellerman, MD, American Academy of Family Physicians**

"All of us should take our health seriously. We should each have a personal medical home: a family physician that we trust: A family physician that works with us to provide optimal health care so that all of us can lead healthier and longer lives".

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