

# What to expect from a medical check-up

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Staying healthy is a top priority for everyone, and one of the most effective ways to achieve this is to have regular health screenings. Unfortunately, many overlook or avoid these check-ups, considering them unnecessary or time-consuming. However, regular medical check-ups are crucial in preventive healthcare, early detection, and overall well-being. By undergoing regular check-ups, people can take proactive steps to maintain their health and prevent serious health issues from developing.



Why is a medical check-up important?

- It helps in the early detection and prevention of diseases. Regular check-ups allow doctors to identify potential health issues before they become more severe or life-threatening.
- It provides an opportunity to monitor and manage existing chronic health conditions, ensuring they are adequately controlled and treated.
- It helps maintain overall health and well-being by guiding healthy lifestyle practices like diet and exercise.

The specific tests, screenings, and examinations performed during a check-up may vary depending on your age, gender, medical history, and risk factors. However, here are some common components that may be included in a medical check-up:

## Updated health history

Your doctor will ask about any recent developments or changes in your health history, including medications, allergies, surgeries, and lifestyle factors. You will be asked questions about your lifestyle. The doctor will also ask specific questions regarding your health and any symptoms you might have experienced, such as fatigue, restlessness, irritability, difficulty breathing, joint pains, and more.

## Blood pressure measurement

This test helps determine if a person has high or low blood pressure, which can indicate cardiovascular health.

## Blood tests

These tests analyse various blood components, such as cholesterol, blood sugar (glucose), and more. Blood tests can provide valuable information about a person's overall health and detect any abnormalities or underlying medical conditions.

### **Urine analysis**

This test examines a person's urine for the presence of certain substances, such as glucose, protein, or blood. It can help identify conditions like urinary tract infections, kidney problems, or diabetes.

Body mass index (BMI) calculation: BMI is calculated using height and weight measurements to assess whether a person is underweight, average, overweight, or obese. It indicates a person's overall weight status.

### **Physical examination**

A general medical practitioner will conduct a physical examination to assess various aspects of a person's health, including listening to the heart and lungs, checking reflexes, examining the abdomen, and evaluating the overall physical condition.

### **Cancer screenings**

Depending on age and gender, specific cancer screenings may be recommended during a medical check-up. These screenings can include mammograms for breast cancer, Pap smears for cervical cancer, prostate cancer screenings, testicular exams for men, and colonoscopies for colorectal cancer.

### **Vaccinations**

Your doctor may review your vaccination status to ensure that you are up-to-date and may recommend additional vaccinations such as a tetanus, flu, or Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccination based on your age and health conditions.

### **HIV testing, counselling, and support**

These services are crucial in promoting HIV awareness, prevention, early diagnosis, and ensuring that those living with HIV can access the necessary care and support they need. Examples of other counselling topics include smoking cessation, safe sex practices, and pre-pregnancy advice on folic acid supplements.

### **Mental health assessment**

Medical check-ups may also include discussions about mental health. Addressing mental health concerns early on can prevent the development of more serious conditions.

### **To prepare for the appointment, individuals can:**

- Make a list of symptoms and questions.
- Review medical history.
- Bring a friend or family member.
- Dress appropriately.
- Follow instructions for fasting or other preparations (follow your doctor's guidelines).
- Review your medical aid benefits.

Many medical aids pay for an annual medical check-up, part of the Intercare service offering. It is always best, however, to first contact your medical scheme to determine if you are covered. Contact your nearest Intercare facility for any assistance.

Undergoing a medical check-up can be a life-saving measure, as it is often the primary means by which you or your doctor become aware of any underlying health issues. The information gathered during the examination is vital in determining the most suitable treatment options. However, it's important to remember that the doctor is just one part of the

equation. To take control of your well-being, staying physically active, maintaining a healthy diet, and actively prioritising your health is essential. By being proactive in these ways, you can shape a healthier future for yourself.

Read Next: [Medical check-ups per age group](#)

#### Sources:

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