

Franklyn Babb, M.D.

Who should get an annual health exam and why is it important?

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People that need a wellness exam, it's pretty much everybody. So we like to make sure that all of our patients, you know, once they're adults will have an annual wellness exam. Annual is a misnomer, a wellness exam, at least every few years. And what we're looking for is disease processes that we can either stop or prevent or manage. And so we're looking for, for instance, blood pressure checks, we're going to do a blood pressure check on our patients, because we're looking for hypertension. And if we can find hypertension, then we start with interventions to ameliorate hypertension, as patients age, for instance, our female patients ages 21 and above, we're going to be screening for cervical cancer. And, and that's done every three years for women ages 21 to 30, and every three to five years for women as they are older than that. And we just have to do some extra tests for those patients. We're looking to evaluate blood tests in some of our patients, we're going to screen for things like hepatitis C, in adults, we're going to screen for HIV in adults. Now, that's usually a once in a lifetime Type screen. Unless we have a patient that has more risk factors, in which case, we're going to talk to them about those risk factors. And we're going to possibly screen more often, as far as regular blood tests are concerned, we like to do things like a complete blood count that tells us if a patient is anemic, we'll do a comprehensive metabolic panel. And that's looking for any problems with their kidneys, any problems with their liver, we look at some of the electrolytes in in patient's blood to let us know that those are in the right ranges, because when electrolytes get off, people can feel bad. We start screening for lipids, patients who are over 40, for sure, and patients with a family history of family, familial hyperlipidemia, for instance, those patients we're going to screen at an earlier age, because they're at a higher risk for heart disease in as a younger person. And so we're going to be doing those kinds of things. As you age we want to screen for cancer. Colon cancer is a very important screening tests that we do or arrange for. And we do know that right now that patients haven't been getting their colorectal cancer screenings done because they've been afraid to. And so we're encouraging our patients to do that we're encouraging our patients to get the vaccinations that we know have helped people. And so we're we're making those recommendations. And then we like to make sure that we have them follow up on those findings. And like I said, if it's a younger patient, you know, we'll send them lab results. And then you can follow up again in a few years. Anytime a patient has a concern, of course, we want them to come in so that we can address those specific concerns. But for just wellness screening, it's every few years if you're a young, healthy adult, every one to three years, if you are over 30. And once you get to 50 We'd like to see you a little bit more often. And 65 Absolutely important every single year.

How should people prepare before going to see their doctor?

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So one of the things that we find very, very helpful is if our patients will bring their history if they have a history of certain diseases, if we know that if they have a history of certain surgeries, that we have that list of the surgeries that they've done, if they would bring us their vaccination records, very helpful if they would bring us their medications, if they're on regular medications. And I'm not talking about the Advil that they take for a headache, I'm talking about if they're already on blood pressure medications, if they bring those blood pressure medications with them, so that we really have the knowledge that we need of their medical history to move forward to make sure that we're able to help them stay as healthy as possible.

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What are some preventative measures people can take to maintain a healthy lifestyle?

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One of the things that I tell my patients is that if they're a smoker, there's absolutely nothing I can do for their health, that would be better for them, than for them to stop smoking. It's very dangerous to everybody's health. There's no such thing as a safe cigarette. So we encourage our patients, if they are smokers, to stop smoking. Now, that is so much easier said than done. It's hard to stop smoking. So we do have medications that we use to help our patients get away from cigarettes, we have support mechanisms that we can enroll our patients in so that they can actually get the kind of support emotional, and even physical support to stop smoking cigarettes. And as I mentioned before, medications, some of the things we also like to talk about in our wellness visits our diet and exercise. And so we like good healthy food we like you know, food that has to be prepared, not, you know, one of those microwave meals, I'm not going to say any names, you know, you put them in the microwave, and you punch the button in it, and you've got something hot, but not something we would call healthy. And so we like Whole Foods, we like real food. And we for patients stay away from pre processed food. Exercise, one of the things that we actually know very well with research is that active people do better. They stay healthier. They seem to live longer. And so we talk to our patients about the minimums of active exercise. And that's, you know, that's a good brisk walk just 30 minutes a day for five days out of the week or 150 minutes a week. So if you want to make that you know, 20 minutes every day, and maybe an extra 10 minutes in there somewhere that would be what we would call a minimum. So we want our patients to stay active because that will really boost a healthy lifestyle.