

# Health Tips

from New London Hospital

## Early Detection Can Prevent Severe Illness

One of the components of preventive medicine is early detection of disease. Screening tests, diagnostic tests, medical exams and self-exams are used to find health problems early on, before symptoms appear. The earlier a disease is diagnosed, the more likely it is that it can be cured or successfully managed. Managing a disease, especially early in its course, may lower its impact on your life or prevent or delay serious complications.



*Dr. Arthur Moore*

Which tests you need depends on your age, health, gender and your risk factors. Risk factors might include family history, such as having a close relative with cancer, and lifestyle issues, such as smoking. Cholesterol screening, for example, is recommended for people who have a family history of early coronary artery disease. Women who are pregnant or trying to become pregnant may be screened for genetic conditions, sexually transmitted diseases and other conditions.

Expert panels of health professionals publish screening guidelines for all health professionals to use. For example, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force and the American College of Physicians both have guidelines for cholesterol screening, and the American Academy of Pediatrics has guidelines on early childhood screening for many different conditions. Sometimes different panels make different recommendations. In these situations, talk with your doctor to decide which guidelines best meet your health needs.

If you are at risk for a disease, you and your doctor will decide whether you should be tested. Discuss the testing, the disease, the risks and benefits of the testing, and what action you are willing to take if you have the condition. For example, if your doctor believes you are at risk for osteoporosis, factors to consider before testing include your age, a family history of osteoporosis, if you are a postmenopausal woman, and your willingness to take medicine or make lifestyle changes if you test positive for this condition.

For those who seek medical information on the internet, **Dr. Moore** recommends [www.uptodate.com/patients](http://www.uptodate.com/patients) as this site contains information from physicians who are experts in their fields of specialty.

**Arthur Moore, MD** is an Internist who has an interest in preventive medicine and sees patients with the full range of internal medicine problems. Dr. Moore welcomes new patients and may be reached at 526-5390.



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