**Put this on your fridge: your ultimate health checks calendar**

Want to know the secret to good health? A simple health check can help.

Global [health and wellness trends](https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/the-next-normal/wellness) suggest that people are more aware of their health than ever before. And yet, millions of people continue to live in poor health or die from preventable diseases. The [World Health Organization](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/noncommunicable-diseases) estimates that globally, noncommunicable or lifestyle diseases like diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular and chronic respiratory diseases claim the lives of **41 million people** every year. What’s more, over [1 in 2 people living with diabetes](https://diabetesatlas.org/) (54%) don’t know they have it. And, in the US, [heart disease](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db427.htm) is the leading cause of death followed by [cancer](https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/dcpc/research/update-on-cancer-deaths/index.htm).

These statistics paint a grim picture, but there is good news.

Our Vitality data has proven that lifestyle changes like exercising more, eating five fruits and vegetables a day, limiting alcohol intake and not smoking can significantly improve your healthspan (the number of years you live in good health).

**The first step? Know your health**

Health checks and preventive screenings are a powerful and cost-effective way to understand and lower your risk of developing a chronic condition. That’s why Vitality incentivises members to take part in preventive screenings like the Vitality Age assessment and Vitality Health Check.

“The **Vitality Age** is an online assessment that measures how healthy you are in relation to your actual age,” explains Dr Deepak Patel, Clinical Specialist at Vitality in South Africa. “It evaluates your healthy eating, exercise and stress management habits and helps you learn more about healthy lifestyle choices.”

Together with the Vitality Age assessment, a **Vitality Health Check** can identify your risk of developing a chronic condition. It includes four tests – blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose and a weight assessment – as well as a non-smoker’s declaration. “These screenings show you how healthy you are right now … and what you can do to stay healthy tomorrow,” Dr Patel adds.

“Plus, you can earn Vitality points for completing your Vitality Age and Vitality Health Check every year and enjoy great rewards like discounted flights, gym fees, cash back on healthy food and more.”

**Health screenings at every age: what to check and when**

In addition to the Vitality health assessments, Dr Patel recommends the following screenings as some of the preventive measures you can take to stay healthy at every life stage:

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| **In your 20s**   * Dental check-up once a year * HIV test once a year * Flu vaccine once a year * Pap smear for women once every 3 years * HPV vaccine once in your lifetime | **In your 30s**   * Dental check-up once a year * HIV test once a year * Flu vaccine once a year * HPV test every 5 years or Pap smear every 3 years for women, for cervical cancer |
| **In your 40s**   * Dental check-up once a year * HIV test once a year * Flu vaccine once a year * HPV test every 5 years or Pap smear every 3 years, in women, for cervical cancer. * Discuss screening for prostate cancer with your doctor * Fecal occult stool test yearly or colonoscopy every 10 years for colon cancer from age 45 years | **In your 50s**   * Dental check-up once a year * HIV test once a year * Flu vaccine once a year * Pap smear for women once every 3 years * Prostate exam for men once every 4 years * Mammogram for women once every 2 years * Glaucoma screening once a year * Colonoscopy once every 10 years |
| **In your 60s+**   * Dental check-up once a year * HIV test once a year * Flu vaccine once a year * Pap smear for women once every 3 years * Mammogram for women once every 2 years * Prostate exam for men once every 4 years * Glaucoma screening once a year * Colonoscopy once every 10 years * Vision test once a year * Hearing test once a year * Falls risk assessment once a year * Pneumococcal vaccine at age 65 years * Shingles vaccine at age 60 years | |

“By knowing your health, you can engage in timely interventions like exercise, nutrition, mental wellbeing and smoking cessation to improve long-term health and wellbeing,” concludes Dr Patel. “Plus, as an added incentive, members earn Vitality points for completing additional preventive screenings, making it even more rewarding to live life with Vitality.”