



Men's Health

5 Reasons for Young Men to Make Regular Doctor Visits



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If you're a young man, age 18 to 39, what keeps you from going to the doctor? Too busy? Not sick enough? Concerned about hearing bad news? Men are well known for avoiding doctor visits, but consider the positives of establishing a relationship with a primary care doctor.

[John Proctor, MD](#), a [family medicine](#) specialist with TriHealth Western Family Physicians, offers up several reasons to get regular checkups at a young age. A primary care physician is a partner who can help you set your course for a healthier future and help decrease serious medical issues later in life.

1) Find a doctor before you need one.

It's easier to establish with a primary care physician when you are healthy. "Physician panels can fill quickly, and being an established patient helps you get care in a timely manner," Dr. Proctor says. He adds, "Most insurance companies cover annual physicals and age-appropriate yearly screenings," Dr. Proctor says. "We can talk about weight, exercise, mental health and substance use." His college-aged students often are covered by their parents' insurance. Some insurance companies even offer rewards such as lower premiums for proactive preventative care such as annual physicals.

2) Identify health issues early.

Regular checkups allow your doctor to identify issues like high blood pressure and obesity early so you can work on lifestyle changes to prevent serious conditions later on, like stroke or diabetes. "I see men heading

toward their 40s who are overweight but otherwise healthy, and they find out they have diabetes,” Dr. Proctor comments. “In most cases, it doesn’t reverse. With 20-somethings, we have the opportunity to intervene on health issues before they require heavy amounts of medications or more complex interventions.”

3) Stay up to date on vaccines.

Regular checkups make it easy to get important immunizations. If you haven’t gotten it already, an HPV vaccine is highly effective for preventing throat cancers, anal and genital cancers and genital warts. The age range for getting the vaccine has expanded in recent years, so check with your doctor about the latest recommendations. Keeping current with a tetanus/diphtheria/pertussis (whooping cough) booster is also important for your own health and that of young children you’re in contact with who aren’t fully immunized against pertussis. As we’re moving through a pandemic, Dr. Proctor says, a COVID-19 vaccine is safe and worthwhile in preventing severe cases of the virus, as well as reducing spread of the virus and development of new variants in the community.

4) Find a trusted resource for anxiety and depression.

It can be difficult to talk about mood disorders, but having a relationship with a primary care doctor can make it more comfortable. “We deal with anxiety and depression a lot; many people don’t require a psychiatrist. We can prescribe medicine short or long term and refer a person for counseling, as needed. We also can talk about substance use and improving mood through strategies such as exercise, diet, stress management and sleep management.”

5) Screen for age-related, hereditary and lifestyle-related diseases.

Testicular cancer is the most common cancer in young men ages 20 to 35. Screening for this cancer as well as establishing a screening schedule for diseases that run in your family (e.g. cardiovascular disease) can aid with early intervention. “If you’re single and sexually active, we can talk about prevention or treatment of sexually transmitted diseases,” Dr. Proctor says. A primary care doctor also can address infectious blood-borne diseases such as HIV and hepatitis.

Dr. Proctor also recommends dental checkups every six months and routine eye exams as your eye doctor recommends.

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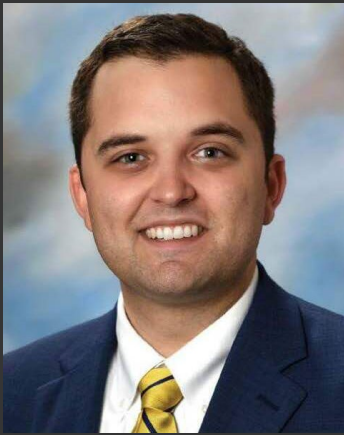


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