

In your 20s:

Everyone:

Find a good primary care physician. Yes, you are (probably) in great health right now (which makes it [a good time to get life insurance](#), by the way), with a superhuman capacity to bounce back from health problems, but that will not last forever (sorry). So, much like you might use your 20s to see what kind of romantic partner suits you, spend some time now finding doctors you like, who you could imagine going to for many years to come.

While you're with those healthcare professionals:

- Do a baseline check-up and screenings for sexually transmitted infections, blood pressure, and cholesterol, including blood tests, and pay attention to the test results.
- Discuss any [family history of chronic diseases](#). These can include diabetes, heart disease and cancer.
- Talk about lifestyle choices, such as diet and exercise, and their potential impact on long-term health.
- Ask about what immunizations you should have (including HPV), and get in the habit of having an annual flu shot. Flu in your 20s is miserable; flu when you're older can be deadly. Get in the habit now.

All of this sets you up well for the decades to come.

Women

- The [CDC recommends](#) that women get HPV and Pap tests at 21 years old and do them regularly going forward. (This can help spot or prevent cervical cancer). If your results are fine, you may not need another one for several years. Your doctor will tell you if this is the case.
- If you are using birth control (or want to), it's worth having a frank, open-ended conversation with your OB-GYN about the available options and their pros and cons. Birth control is an ever-evolving field, so you may have choices available that you're unaware of. Also, your 20s is a good time to find an OB-GYN you like and develop a relationship with them: You may need them more as you get older.