

## 10 QUESTIONS TO ASK AT YOUR NEXT ANNUAL CHECKUP

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Talking to your doctor about any health concerns you may have can be a powerful tool when it comes to catching health problems early and preventing disease. "An annual checkup is an opportunity to strengthen a partnership with your health care provider and discuss questions that can help you assess your health outlook," says Dr. Anupam Sidhu, family medicine doctor at Houston Methodist.

Consider asking your doctor the following questions. "Think of your annual checkup as a two-part process. First, is the exam itself," Dr. Sidhu says. "The second part is getting a thorough understanding of your health and what you can do to improve it."

Here are ten questions to ask your doctor.

**1. Are all my vital signs normal or within the accepted range?**

Ask about your body mass index (BMI), a formula that tells if your weight is appropriate for your height, as well as blood pressure and pulse and lung function.

**2. Is my health better, worse or the same since my last visit?**

Ask how your numbers and vitals compare to your last checkup.

**3. What are the best ways I can maintain my health or manage my condition?**

"I recommend speaking to your doctor about your diet, your level of physical activity and any other concerns you have," Dr. Sidhu notes.

**4. Given my personal and family medical history, do I have a higher than normal risk for certain illnesses?**

Review with your doctor your family medical history, which shows if grandparents, parents or siblings had heart attacks, breast or prostate cancers and other illnesses.

**5. Given my age and health, what symptoms may indicate the onset of an illness?**

Knowing what symptoms to look for can empower you to take charge of your health.

**6. Given my medical status, what specific symptoms may indicate a health emergency?**

Discuss health emergency warning signs, especially if you have a family history or medical condition that puts you at greater risk. It's also helpful to know which symptoms require a trip to the ER and which can be treated at an urgent care center.

**7. What screenings should I have?**

"Depending on your medical history, age and health status, your doctor may recommend certain screenings, such as a mammogram for breast cancer, a bone density scan for osteoporosis or a colonoscopy for colorectal cancer," says Dr. Sidhu.

**8. Should I be seeing a specialist for any reason?**

Ask if you feel you need help managing a chronic condition or have a disease that may require the expertise of a specialist.

**9. What new therapies or changes in treatment have come up since my last checkup?**

Medicine is constantly evolving. Be sure you know about any new technologies or treatment options for your condition.

**10. Should I get a flu shot or other vaccines?**

Your doctor can tell you if you are up-to-date on your vaccinations, including your flu shot.

*(Adjust these as needed for your peripheral neuropathy.)*