

1. Should I be concerned about any health risks?

This question opens the door to a conversation about your current health and what you should be looking out for in the future. We all want to know if any aches, pains or other symptoms are causes for concern. Review the results of screenings and blood tests focusing on any readings outside the normal range.

2. What health screenings and tests do I need?

At a routine exam, doctors will check your body mass index (BMI), skin conditions, cholesterol and blood pressure. You may also be due for various cancer screenings. Based on your age, lifestyle and current health, your doctor will recommend the right health screenings for older adults.

This is a good time to bring up your family history, including any incidence of heart disease, cancer, stroke or other conditions that run in the family. You may be a good candidate for genetic testing, which can uncover any risks.

3. What are the side effects of my prescribed medications?

Discuss medication management with your doctor and pharmacist. If you are already experiencing side effects, ask the doctor for a different dosage or prescription.

Older adults often have a team of health care professionals prescribing medications. Give each doctor your list to prevent drug interactions. Check if any of the medications can be eliminated, and if the vitamins or supplements you're taking interfere with a drug's effectiveness.

4. How can I manage my chronic conditions?

If you're dealing with chronic medical conditions, see your primary care physician or specialist often. Discuss ways to monitor and manage your symptoms between visits. Your doctor can also advise you on lifestyle changes that could improve your daily life.

5. What lifestyle changes can improve my health?

Deep down you probably know the answer to this, but having an authority figure like a doctor reinforce that knowledge can give you the willpower to make a change for good.

6. Should I make any changes to my nutrition and diet?

You'll find lots of articles online linking senior nutrition and health. Your doctor can separate fact from fiction and share the latest research on what's best for you.

7. What are the best activities and exercises for me?

Exercise goes a long way in maintaining health, but not every activity is good for everybody. Find out what you can do safely based on your physical condition.

8. Are there any mental health or cognitive assessments you would recommend?

As part of your annual Medicare wellness visit, your doctor will be checking for signs of depression and loss of cognitive abilities. The tests and questions are very basic, so if you believe that your memory or thinking skills have deteriorated more than what is normal for aging adults, now is the time to bring it up. Your doctor will send you to a specialist in mental health services for older adults.

9. How often should I see you or my specialists?

That answer depends on your current health, test results and age. If you are experiencing new or worsening symptoms, don't wait. Schedule an appointment.

10. Do you know of any resources or support that will help me manage my health?

This question deserves extra points. Medical professionals cringe when they hear that you are looking up symptoms online. Yes, there are plenty of reliable resources, but even those can cause undue concern. Your doctor and other staff members will be happy to point you to resources and groups that focus on healthy aging.
