



STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

THE IMPORTANCE OF KNOWING YOUR PERSONAL HEALTH STATS

Contrary to the old saying, when it comes to your health, what you don't know *can* hurt you. That's why it's important to have a snapshot of your personal health statistics, such as blood pressure and cholesterol levels. After all, the more you know about your body, the healthier you're likely to stay.

The first step, of course, is a physical. Depending on factors like age and family history, you may want to schedule a routine medical exam on an annual basis. Even if you feel fine, it's a preventative measure that can help you prolong the feeling.

As simple as a doctor's visit may seem, it can be a challenge for some – particularly men. According to an NBC News report, American boys and girls draw upon health care services equally until the age of 18. After that, men's doctors' visits plummet. In fact, by the time U.S. men reach their 40s, one-third will avoid a yearly check-up "out of male pride, out of white-coat fear or simply out of lifestyle habit."¹

Whether male or female, you should never underestimate the value of a regularly scheduled physical exam. By understanding and monitoring your health, you can more readily identify risk factors, address health threats, and stop small medical challenges from becoming large ones. Putting it simply, it's critical to know your numbers.

WHAT NUMBERS SHOULD YOU KNOW?

Medical check-ups can vary from one physician to the next, but, in general, you're apt to undergo a series of brief tests that will create a profile of your overall health – i.e., your "numbers." At the very least, they should include:

Blood Pressure – High blood pressure, also known as hypertension, puts extra stress on your arteries and your heart. This can lead to heart attacks, stroke, kidney damage, vision loss, and other serious health issues. Because hypertension has no symptoms, it is often called "the silent killer," which makes preventative doctor's visits even more crucial.

Cholesterol – Your body can't function without cholesterol, a fatty substance in your blood. That's the good news. The bad news? High cholesterol is a major risk factor in heart disease, heart attack and stroke. Make sure you know your levels of good cholesterol (HDL), bad cholesterol (LDL), triglycerides and total cholesterol. And ask your doctor to explain each one.

Blood sugar – The amount of sugar in your blood (glucose) can vary throughout the day based on your meals and activity level. But if your blood sugar becomes too high or too low, diabetes may be the reason. Left untreated, diabetes can affect the blood supply to your heart, kidney, eyes and nerves, creating irreparable damage. Periodic glucose testing can help identify irregular blood sugar levels early on.

DID YOU KNOW?

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In addition, your doctor should “take your vitals” in order to assess your pulse rate, body temperature, respiration rate and other basic functions. You may also undergo targeted tests – for example, an analysis of your red and white blood cell counts – or tests for specific diseases, such as prostate cancer.

But no matter what test you’re taking, make sure you understand the reason for the test and the implications of the results. Know your numbers, understand what they mean, and keep them handy in an online file or on a small index card.

CALL BEST DOCTORS FOR HELP

If you’re questioning your numbers or don’t understand a result, turn to a Best Doctors specialist for help through our Ask the Expert service. And if your numbers lead to a troubling diagnosis, Best Doctors can provide an expert review of your case through our In-depth Medical Review service.

Just call Best Doctors at 1-866-904-0910 or visit www.bestdoctors.com/members

Both of these services will provide information you can share with your own doctor to be sure you’re doing what’s right together. Because when it comes to your health, making the right decisions is your number one priority.

1. http://www.nbcnews.com/id/49794785/ns/health-mens_health/t/too-tough-get-sick-why-men-wont-go-doctor/

TARGET NUMBERS

What’s “normal” for one person, may not be typical for another. But, in general, the desirable rates for the key areas of health are:

Blood Pressure: 120/80

Total Cholesterol: Less than 200

Blood Sugar: 70 – 100 (fasting range)

Pulse: 60-100 beats per minute (adult resting rate)

Body temperature: Around 98.6F



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