

Periodic Health Exam



More is Not Always Better

While traditionally many family doctors have scheduled their patients into the office once a year to do an "annual physical", there is no scientific evidence that this actually prevents disease or saves lives. In keeping with the most up to date medical literature and recommendations, we are moving away from the annual physical and moving towards the Periodic Health Exam.

What is a Periodic Health Exam?

It is an appointment that focuses on health prevention. Lifestyle changes such as exercise, limiting alcohol, and quitting smoking have all been proven to improve your health and will be reviewed at your Periodic Health Exam. Appropriate cancer screening tests, required blood work (**if any**), and immunizations will also be reviewed. A full head to toe exam is not necessary, and instead your doctor will do a focused physical exam based on your current concerns and your current health.

How often should I get a Periodic Health Exam?

Periodic health exams (previously referred to as physicals or check-ups) are NOT required annually and may be done when you have a problem or are due for a test (eg. Pap).

Patients should book a regular appointment if at any time they feel unwell or have an acute concern. Patients with chronic medical conditions such as high blood pressure or diabetes will have more frequent monitoring visits in addition to their periodic health exam.

Preventative Care Screening

Preventative screening of all appropriate patients is recommended to assist in early detection of cervical, colon and breast cancers. [Cancer Care Ontario](#) guidelines for this screening:

- Pap test – women aged 21-69 who are or have ever been sexually active, every 3 years*
- Mammogram – women aged 50-74, every 2 years as per breast density*
- Colon Cancer screening – starting age 50 or those with a family history of colon cancer prior to age 50. Stool test every 2 yrs for average risk individuals; colonoscopy for high-risk patients or as per physician*

* Screening intervals and initiation of testing may differ based on personal and family history