

# Disease Prevention Checklist

Health screenings, vaccines, and guarding yourself from germs and bugs can help keep you feeling your best. Here are tips to help you better prevent diseases:



## GET SCREENED FOR DISEASES

Some screenings can reduce your risk of dying from a disease. But sometimes, experts say, a test may cause more harm than good. Before you get a test, talk with your doctor about the possible benefits and harms to help you decide what's best for your health.

To learn about screening tests, talk to your doctor. Common tests include:

- High blood pressure.
- Elevated blood lipids, like cholesterol.
- Diabetes and prediabetes.
- Depression and anxiety.
- Sexually transmitted infections.
- Cancers.
- Substance use disorders.
- Reduced bone density (osteoporosis).



## GUARD AGAINST GERMS

For nearly a century, bacteria-fighting drugs known as antibiotics have helped to control and destroy many of the harmful bacteria that can make us sick. But these drugs don't work at all against viruses, such as those that cause colds or flu. Learn how to protect yourself against germs in the environment.

To block harmful germs:

- Maintain a healthy lifestyle, including proper diet and exercise.
- Get all CDC recommended vaccinations.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes.
- Wash your hands with soap and water.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. Stay home when you're sick.
- Take prescribed antibiotics as instructed.

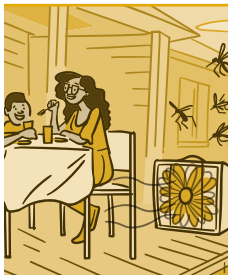


## PROTECT YOUR BODY'S BACTERIA

Microscopic creatures—including bacteria, fungi, and viruses—can make you ill. But what you may not realize is that trillions of microbes are living in and on your body right now. Most don't harm you at all. We tend to focus on destroying bad microbes. But taking care of good ones may be even more important.

To protect good microbes:

- Eat a diet high in fiber. Fiber is found in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- Limit foods that can hurt your gut microbes, including sugar and fatty foods.
- Know when to wash your hands, like when preparing food and before eating.
- Use hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) when you can't use soap and water.
- Avoid antibacterial soaps and other products.
- Be wary of "probiotics." Many are untested.



**PREVENT MOSQUITO-BORNE ILLNESSES**

Most mosquito bites are relatively harmless. The itchy bumps often last for just a day or two after a mosquito has punctured your skin. But if the mosquito is carrying certain germs, like viruses or parasites, these pathogens might enter your blood during the bite and make you sick. But you can take simple steps to avoid getting bit by those blood-sucking insects.

**To avoid mosquito bites:**

- Cover your skin. When outside, use long sleeves, pants, and socks.
- Use insect repellents when outside. Follow the instructions on the label.
- Use a fan when sitting outside.
- Protect your home. Use screens on doors and windows. Repair screens if needed.
- Remove breeding grounds. Drain puddles around your house.
- Get vaccinated against mosquito-borne diseases, visit [wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel).



**BLOCK TICK BITES AND LYME DISEASE**

When warm weather arrives, you might get the urge to walk barefoot through the grass. But before you stroll through your lawn or head out on a hiking trail, you'll want to protect yourself and your loved ones from ticks that often lurk in tall grass, thick brush, and wooded areas. Many ticks carry disease, so do what you can to keep ticks from taking a bite out of you.

**To prevent tick bites and tick-borne diseases:**

- Treat clothing and gear with products containing permethrin.
- Use effective insect repellents. Find one at [www.epa.gov/insect-repellents](http://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents).
- Avoid areas where ticks hide, including high grass and leaf litter.
- Change your clothes when you come inside. Wash the clothes in hot water.
- Check your whole body for ticks. Remove ticks with tweezers.
- Shower within two hours after coming indoors to wash away unattached ticks.



**PROTECT YOURSELF AND EVERYONE ELSE FROM DISEASE**

We share more than food and culture within our homes and communities. We can also spread disease. Luckily, we live in a time when vaccines can protect us from many of the most serious illnesses. Staying current on your shots helps you—and your neighbors—avoid getting and spreading disease.

**To stay up-to-date, check on shots for:**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bacterial meningitis                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Influenza (flu)             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chickenpox                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Measles, Mumps, and Rubella |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diphtheria                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Pertussis (whooping cough)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Haemophilus influenzae type b          | <input type="checkbox"/> Pneumococcal pneumonia      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hepatitis A and B                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Rotavirus diarrhea          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cervical & other cancers caused by HPV | <input type="checkbox"/> Shingles                    |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Tetanus                     |