



## Wellness Checklist

The new year has just begun, which means it is the perfect time to plan for your annual physical. An annual physical presents you with the opportunity to check in with your body and to make room for improvements to your physical health. If you haven't had a physical in a while, going back to the doctor can feel intimidating; however, there are steps you can take to prepare for the appointment.

Trust Care Health notes that annual physicals are an “essential part of staying healthy, helping to catch any potential issues early and giving you the opportunity to discuss concerns one-on-one with your doctor”. These visits allow for a medical professional to “fully assess” your health, confirm you are up to date on any vaccinations, and make sure you are getting the attention you need depending on your age bracket. If you are unsure where to start before your appointment, here is a **list** of what to bring:

- Insurance information (if you have an active insurance policy)
- Any medications you are taking
- Medical history (this includes past procedures and treatments, as well as any results from previous tests or lab work)
- A list of any symptoms or abnormalities that you are currently experiencing (make sure to note what they are, when/how often they occur, and how long they have been present)
- Any other questions

Once you have your necessary items together, it is time to make and go to the appointment. When you show up, you can expect your medical professional to go through:

- Recording your height, weight, and BMI (body mass index)
- Measuring your blood pressure, heart rate, and breathing rate
- Your medical history
- Any symptoms you are experiencing
- A regular physical exam to check for any abnormalities or discrepancies

Depending on your age, gender, or changes in health, your doctor may also perform additional exams, such as requesting blood work or urinalysis. Trust Care also notes that the American Heart Association suggests having a cholesterol test every 4-6 years, but you may go through this test more frequently if you are overweight or have other risk factors for heart disease. Additionally, if you are at risk for diabetes, your doctor will “likely check your blood sugar levels as well”.

Trust Care points out that while you may have questions for your doctor, your doctor will also have questions for you to understand your lifestyle. They may ask if you smoke, drink, or about your sleeping habits. They will also want to know what steps you are taking for your health, such as how often you exercise or what your typical diet looks like.

As for your questions, you may feel overwhelmed during the appointment and not be sure what to ask. It helps to have a “cheat sheet” ahead of time with any concerning questions such as:

- Are my heart rate and blood pressure in the normal range?
- What tests and screenings are you ordering and why?
- What lifestyle changes do you recommend for me to improve my health?

Make sure the questions you ask address your concerns and are specific to the information you want from your doctor.

After the appointment, your doctor will let you know any information that you need. The information will vary depending on your current health situation. Some of the things your doctor will tell you could sound like:

- You are currently in good health
- You may need additional testing or need to be referred to a specialist
- You need an adjustment to a current treatment or medication
- You can make changes to your lifestyle to improve your health, and some suggestions.

When your doctor is explaining the results of your appointment, make sure to ask questions and ask for clarification. The doctor is there to help you and make sure you are at your healthiest, so do not be afraid to ask questions. Booking this appointment should be an empowering step for you to reclaim your health and live the healthiest version of your life.