

Top health tips your family physician wants you to know

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Family physicians are trained to provide comprehensive care for patients of all ages, treat a wide variety of conditions and address many health care needs. This makes family physicians the first point of contact for many patients. It also helps family physicians develop long-term relationships with their patients, which fosters trust and open communication. As a trusted source for health care, family physicians offer a collection of invaluable tips they want their patients to keep in mind to lead happier, healthier lives.

Here is a list from the AMA's What Doctors Wish Patients Knew™ series—which provides physicians with a platform to share what they want patients to understand about today's health care headlines—on some important health tips that family physicians want patients to know.

1 Get vaccinated against influenza

The flu season can be severe, but for the past couple of years it has been different. There still remains the looming threat of a combination of a severe flu season with COVID-19 and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). This year, with the availability of an updated COVID-19 and seasonal influenza vaccines as well as the new RSV immunizations, some medical experts are optimistic. Yet there is still concern about hospital capacity related to the spread of these viruses which is why doctors are urging people to get vaccinated to reduce the risk of severe outcomes.

2 Take steps to protect yourself from the contagious norovirus

It seems as though everyone has experienced a sudden turn of the stomach, causing a mad rush to the bathroom due to vomiting, diarrhea or both. And, unfortunately, remaining near the bathroom may be the only plan for the next day or two. The most likely culprit is norovirus, and it can happen to anyone at any time. Knowing what to do—and how to prevent norovirus infection—is key. Two family physicians discuss what they want patients to know about norovirus.

3 Understand high blood pressure

Almost half of all adults have high blood pressure. But the tricky part is that a lot of people don't know they have this condition.

This is because when a person's blood pressure numbers are high, they might not feel any symptoms. That's why it is important to understand high blood pressure. A family physician shares what patients need to know about high blood pressure.

4 Identify and manage high cholesterol

Nearly 94 million U.S. adults over the age of 20 have what could be considered borderline high cholesterol, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Yet because this condition often presents without symptoms, many are not aware they have high cholesterol until they visit their doctor.

5 Make changes to prevent type 2 diabetes

Type 2 diabetes is striking an ever-growing number of adults, but with rising rates of childhood obesity, it has become more common among youth too. There is good news though—type 2 diabetes is often preventable. In fact, many cases can be avoided by making appropriate lifestyle changes. These changes

can also lower your risk for developing heart disease and other conditions. A family physician shares what to keep in mind when preventing type 2 diabetes.

6 Anti-obesity medications may be needed

In the battle against obesity, physicians play a crucial role in guiding patients towards a healthier and more sustainable lifestyle. While healthy eating and physical activity remain fundamental pillars in weight management, there are instances when additional support becomes necessary. Enter anti-obesity medications—Food and Drug Administration-approved medications used to help people achieve and sustain a healthier weight. But the world of anti-obesity medications is complex, and these new and emerging tools are often misunderstood.

7 Limit ultraprocessed foods

For people on the run, ultraprocessed food may become their go-to diet, sacrificing nutrition for convenience. While it may be convenient, consuming ultraprocessed foods on a regular basis increases a person's risk of health complications including cardiovascular disease, certain cancers, obesity and type 2 diabetes. But it can be hard to tell when these foods are on your plate.

To help women maintain optimal health and well-being, here are the [top health tips that ob-gyns want patients to know](#).

And for diseases caused by viruses, bacteria, fungi or parasites, here is some [practical advice provided by infectious diseases physicians](#) to safeguard patients' health and protect their loved ones.