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# Care Connections<sup>SM</sup>

Sharing the  
knowledge for  
better health

MARCH 2022

## Know your cancer risk

Do you know if you are at risk for cancer? Knowing your risk, and getting screened, can catch cancer early and could save your life.

So where should you start? There are many cancers that you should be screened for. The U.S. Preventative Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommends these screenings:

**Lung Cancer**—You should be screened if you are age 50-80, currently smoke or have quit in the last 15 years, and have a smoking history of 20 pack-years or more.

**Breast Cancer**—Women should start screenings once per year by age 50. You can also talk about screening sooner with your doctor.

**Cervical Cancer**—Women should be tested at least every 3 years starting at age 21.

**Colorectal Cancer**—Both men and women should start testing by age 45. There are many kinds of screenings. Ask your doctor which is right for you.

**Prostate Cancer**—Men age 55-69 should ask their doctor about the need for this screening.

With your doctor, you should also take a look at your family history. Then talk with your doctor about what else to be screened for and when.



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## Are you prepared for a disaster?

Are you ready for a disaster? Forest fires, hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, blizzards, flash floods, power blackouts—no matter where you live, disasters can strike without warning. It might not be something you want to think about, but for those with a long-term illness, being ready could save your life.

Need help getting started? Ask yourself the three questions below. Then use your answers to start making a disaster action plan.

**“Do I know who to reach out to?”** You’ll need your support team more than ever in a time of crisis. Plan who you will contact and how you will reach them. You may not be able to use your phone or the internet to reach them. You may have to use walkie-talkies, or even ask others to take messages for you, so keep important addresses in your plan.

You should also save the local and national numbers for response organizations like the Red Cross. Also, check [DisasterAssistance.gov](https://www.disasterassistance.gov) for other helpful numbers. Here’s one that could prove useful:

**FEMA Disaster Assistance:** 1-800-621-3362

**“Do I have the right supplies?”** This doesn’t just mean extra food and water (though that is important). It means filters and tablets to clean water. It means having a generator and crank radio if the power goes out. It even means making sure your car is running well and storing extra gas in case your tank is empty.

**“Do I have access to my treatments?”** You may not be able to get to a pharmacy during or after a disaster. Keep copies of your prescription and extra medicine on hand if you can. Also make sure you’re up-to-date on your shots. If you have medical tools at home, learn how to work them. This way you will be okay if you can’t leave to get to your routine care.

**Still have questions?** Need help making a plan for disasters? Give your program nurse a call. Your nurse can help you think of items you may need. Your nurse can also give you a list of your medications.

## Know your numbers—Urine and blood tests

Chances are, at some point, you have given a urine or blood sample. These tests can be quick and easy to do. This is even more true if you have other illnesses. Urine and blood tests can catch health issues before they become problems. These tests can show things like inflammation or issues with protein levels. Here are some common tests you may have come across during doctor visits.

### **Estimated Glomerular filtration rate (eGFR): what is it?**

Your kidneys remove wastes from your body. The best way to know if your kidneys are working well is a test called glomerular filtration rate (GFR). GFR is a blood test that measures your creatinine levels. Creatinine is a waste product made by your muscles. GFR helps doctors spot early kidney disease even before you have serious symptoms.

### **What do the numbers mean?**

The eGFR number can change based on age, gender, and weight. For a healthy adult, the normal eGFR number is more than 90. If kidney disease signs are found, your specialist will speak to you about next steps.

### **What is your risk, and when should you talk to your doctor about this test?**

Early-stage kidney disease is hard to spot. It may not cause any symptoms. Your doctor may schedule an eGFR test if you are at higher risk. It is important that you speak to your doctor about your results.

### **Other urine tests**

#### **Why is your Urine Creatinine level important?**

The amount of creatinine in your blood or urine can tell your doctor how well your kidneys are working. Creatinine levels can vary based on your age, race, and gender.

#### **What does your Albumin-to-creatinine level mean?**

Another way to track creatinine in your urine is the albumin/creatinine ratio (ACR). Albumin is a protein found in the blood. There is normally little to no albumin found in urine. Healthy kidneys do not clean it from the blood, so it is not released when you pee.

#### **Why do we measure Blood Urea Nitrogen (BUN) levels?**

Urea nitrogen is a normal waste product in your blood. When you eat food, protein is broken down and processed. This releases urea nitrogen into your blood. Healthy kidneys clear this waste from your blood. However, when your kidneys aren’t working well, BUN levels rise. This makes BUN a good measure of kidney function.