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HealthWatch

The Rationale for Annual Blood Testing

Health conscious people often fail to appreciate the critical importance of regular blood screening.

The most comprehensive blood test is called the CBC/Chemistry Profile. This low-cost profile measures 45 different blood parameters that can have a dramatic impact on one's state of health.

One of the many serious disorders that can be detected by the CBC/Chemistry Profile is calcium overload. This condition is caused when too much calcium is removed from the bone and deposited into the vascular system. Unless discovered by a blood test, people often don't find out about calcium imbalance until after they suffer a crippling bone fracture, a painful kidney stone (renal calculi), or heart valve failure (due to excess valvular calcification). These diseases often manifest years after the calcium imbalance first begins, yet a low-cost CBC/Chemistry Profile can detect this problem early and enable the person to take relatively simple nutritional steps to correct the calcium imbalance before it causes a disease state.

Another disorder people encounter as they grow older is elevated serum glucose that can contribute to the development of arterial and neurological disease and accelerate aging through a process known as glycosylation. If high glucose is discovered, there are lifestyle changes, drug and nutrient therapies available to bring these levels into normal ranges.

Excess amounts of serum iron will generate massive free radicals throughout the body that significantly increase the risk of cancer, atherosclerosis and probably neurological disorders such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease. If a blood test shows iron levels are too high, there are many ways to bring it down. It seems illogical to wait for an iron overload-induced disease to manifest just because you did not want to "bother" getting an annual CBC/Chemistry Profile.

Protecting against drug-induced toxicities

The average person over age 60 takes several prescription drugs every day to treat or prevent chronic medical conditions. These drugs have toxic side effects that result in the death of 125,000 to 189,000 Americans each year. In fact, according to the American Medical Association, adverse reactions to prescription drugs are between the fourth and sixth leading causes of death in the United States. The American Medical Association emphasizes that these deaths are occurring even though the drugs are being prescribed by doctors who are supposed to monitor patients to prevent these drug-induced deaths. The fact is that HMOs are seeking to save money in the short-term and are not recommending CBC/Chemistry Profiles that would help detect drug-induced liver and kidney impairment in time to prevent disability and death. If you are taking certain prescription medications, regular blood testing is mandatory according to the FDA, yet doctors routinely fail to prescribe the recommended blood tests and their patients pay the "ultimate" price.

It's not just prescription drugs that can cause irreversible liver or kidney damage. There are many factors (alcohol, OTC-drugs, excess niacin, hepatitis C) that can make a person susceptible to liver or kidney damage. For most people, these conditions smolder for years until a life-threatening medical crisis occurs. Because of a phenomenon known as "individual variability," some people are especially vulnerable to liver and kidney damage, yet a CBC/Chemistry Profile can detect an underlying problem in time to take corrective actions.

Predicting heart attack risk

The reason most people consider blood testing is to ascertain their cardiovascular risk factors. Published studies consistently show that various cholesterol fractions (HDL, LDL) and triglycerides can contribute to heart attack and stroke. What most people fail to realize is that significant changes can occur in these blood fat levels over a year's time, meaning that previous tests may not accurately reflect your current serum lipid status. Tests that help predict heart attack and stroke, such as cholesterol, triglyceride,

glucose and iron measurements, are included in the low-cost CBC/Chemistry Profile. Additional blood tests to evaluate cardiovascular disease risk include homocysteine, C-reactive protein and fibrinogen.

Maintaining a youthful hormone balance

Aging causes significant alterations in hormone balance.

In aging men, beneficial hormones such as testosterone, DHEA and growth hormone decline, while less desirable hormones such as estrogen and insulin often increase. The effects of these hormone imbalances can manifest as clinical depression, increased abdominal obesity, diminished mental and physical energy levels, and loss of libido.

Aging females often suffer a progesterone and DHEA deficit, while levels of estrogen and testosterone can become too high or low. The clinical effects of these hormone imbalances in females often manifest as the symptoms associated with menopause, depression, loss of bone mass and loss of libido.

In both men and women, the failure to correct hormone imbalance can directly contribute to cardiovascular disease, certain forms of cancer, Type II diabetes, osteoporosis and neuronal degeneration.

The good news is that once hormone status is ascertained, definitive corrective action can be taken to safely restore hormone balance to a youthful range.

Conclusions

Annual blood testing is a cornerstone of any scientific program designed to extend the healthy human life span. Conventional doctors often refuse, or don't know how to order the type of blood tests that can reveal correctable underlying risk factors for developing degenerative disease.

The Life Extension Foundation initiated a program in 1996 to enable its members to request any blood test and to receive the actual results of these tests. This service has enabled members to detect abnormalities that can be brought to the attention of their physician, or corrected by lifestyle changes.

Foundation members save more than 50% compared to the prices charged by commercial blood testing laboratories, and avoid having to pay for a doctor's visit just to be put into a position of asking their doctor to order the tests.

For further information and scientific references about using blood tests to protect against aging-related disease, refer to the following
protocols in the Life Extension Foundation's Disease Prevention and Treatment reference book.

Male Hormone Modulation Protocol
Female Hormone Modulation Protocol
Atherosclerosis Protocol
Homocysteine Protocol
Fibrinogen Protocol
Depression Protocol
Age-Associated Mental Impairment Protocol
DHEA Replacement Therapy Protocol

To order blood tests from The Life Extension Foundation Buyers Club, call 1-800-208-3444, fax your order to 954-712-9720, or find out more about it here.

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