

KEEPING HEALTHY AND FIT IN THE GOLDEN YEARS

Although it is recommended to take care of your body at any age with eating health, exercise and prevention, this responsibility reaches a greater level when we reach 40, 50, 60 decades. That is when we are more at risk of developing cancers and health problems. **Prevention** is important by keeping up to date on all immunizations (i.e. flu shot, pneumonia shot), at least yearly physical examinations, checking for hypertension (high blood pressure), diabetes (high blood sugar), high cholesterol.

Screening tests are recommended by the American Cancer Society as follows:

- 1) Yearly mammograms and breast exams beginning at age 40 along with a pelvic exam and PAP smear for the ladies.
- 2) Rectal exam (digital exam) and prostate exam for men age 40 and over, checking the PSA level yearly at age 50 and over.
- 3) Checking for blood in stool yearly at age 50 and over.
- 4) Flexible sigmoidoscopy examination the left colon with a scope to check for polyps or cancers starting at age 50 every 3 to 5 years.
- 5) Chest x-ray and EKG yearly after the age of 35.
- 6) Skin check for cancer yearly.

These screening tests are modified if the patient has a family history of breast or colon cancer.

Some people feel that all these tests are a hassle and why look for trouble if you don't need to.

I believe it is more than a hassle to treat colon cancer than to remove a polyp through the scope before it becomes cancerous and to remove a large

breast cancer along with the breast versus removing small breast cancers preserving the breast and having a better prognosis.

Primary care is trained to do the above screening tests, however, sometimes specialists are needed.

These tests along with other more advanced sophisticated tests are offered at Cedar Tree Medical, Surgical and Urgent Care Center. For an appointment call (302) 945-9730.