

Caring for Persons with **Spinal Cord Injury**

Health Promotion and Maintenance Checklist

The following health promotion and maintenance recommendations are specific to people with spinal cord injury. In addition to these, it is still recommended to follow the [preventative care checklist forms](#) developed by the College of Family Physicians of Canada for the general population.

Urinary Tract

ASK

- Review bladder management program
- Check for history and impact of UTIs. Refer to urologist if >3/year or repeat episodes of Autonomic Dysreflexia (AD), increased leakage, catheter blockage, or haematuria

ORDER

- Check creatinine and electrolytes yearly
- Ultrasound every 1-2 years
- Consider cystoscopy if patient has an indwelling catheter, increased leakage, or haematuria
- Consider PSA over age 50 (over age 40 if family history)
- DO NOT order routine urinalysis or culture and sensitivity

Gastrointestinal

ASK

- Review bowel management program
- Ask about non-specific abdominal complaints (e.g., abdominal bloating, nausea, increased spasticity)

ORDER

- Consider colonoscopy for colon cancer screening over age 50 or earlier if positive family history (every 10 years if negative, more often if positive)

Respiratory

ASK

- Ask about snoring, morning headaches, and daytime drowsiness
- Review history of pulmonary embolism and pneumonia
- Smoking cessation

ORDER

- Spirometry or pulmonary function tests (PFT) yearly
- Pneumococcal vaccination (at time of injury then repeat at age 65)
- Consider overnight oximetry as an alternative to sleep study if sleep apnea suspected
- Yearly influenza vaccination

Cardiovascular

ASK

- Review for episodes of Autonomic Dysreflexia (AD)
- Ask about symptoms of TIA
- Ask about smoking

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Cardiovascular cont.

EXAMINE

- Check lying BP
- Measure weight annually

ORDER

- Consider yearly fasting glucose and lipid profile

Neuromuscular

ASK

- Ask about change in motor or sensory patterns
- Ask about pain or limited range of motion in upper body joints
- Ask about spasticity

ORDER

- Consider bone mineral density every 1-2 years and within first year of injury

ADVISE

- Recommend adequate calcium and vitamin D intake

Skin

ASK

- Ask about skin integrity and pressure ulcers

EXAMINE

- Examine skin for signs of breakdown or pressure ulcers, especially feet and bony prominences

ADVISE

- Early recognition and treatment
- Daily skin checks, especially of Areas at Risk
- Regular repositioning and pressure redistribution
- Keep skin clean, dry, and supple
- Regular seating assessment

Mental Health

ASK

- Ask about mood

Sexuality

ASK

- Ask if sexually active
- Ask if fertility/reproduction required

Social

ASK

- Ask about source of income
- Ask about caregiver situation
- Ask about activity/recreation pursuits
- Ask about living situation