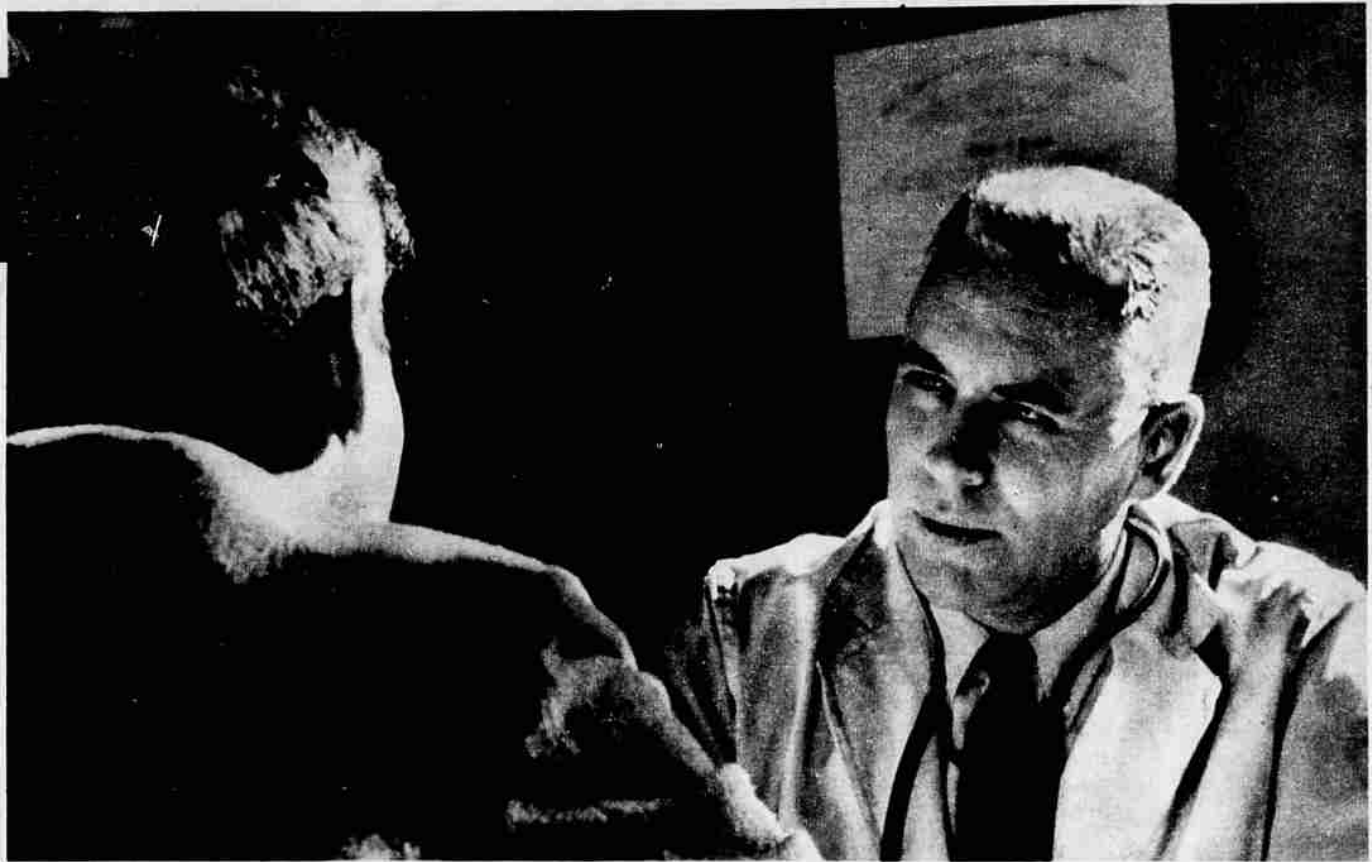


A DOCTOR'S CHECKUP CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE



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Periodic health examinations are shunned by most Americans; yet they're the best way to stop trouble before it starts

(This is the last of a special series of articles excerpted from the new book, "The Life Extension Foundation Guide to Better Health," by Dr. Harry Johnson. Copyright © 1959 by Life Extension Foundation, Inc. Published by Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N. J.)

IT'S SUNDAY MORNING and the place is the parking spot in front of Mr. Joe Goodguy's home. Joe is out there in his polo shirt, slacks, and sneakers, carefully washing down his car. Then he carefully dries it. Then he rubs on a little wax here and there; just a few spots.

Good thing I caught those spots early, Joe says to himself. Might have ended up with some ugly rust. Oh well, he says, putting the rags and polish and hose back in the garage, next time I'll be sure not to leave the car out again in bad weather. I've got a garage — I'll use it. This ol' buggy's got to last another couple of years.

Feeling satisfied with a job well done, Joe goes back into the house and tells his wife and kids that it pays to be on the ball. Good thing I wash the car regularly, Joe tells the family. I found some bad spots, but don't worry, it's all fixed up now. Mrs. Goodguy nods, the children beam, and Joe's proud of himself.

Without realizing it, Joe Goodguy, of whom there are millions equally proud and alert, has just practiced preventive medicine on his auto.

But how about himself? His wife? Are they not precious to each other, to the children? Is not health a possession worthy of care and pride? Can't you be just as happy, if not more so, reporting to the family that the doctor has just given you a clean bill of health? Wouldn't you feel just as pleased to know, perhaps, that the doctor spotted a few potential rust spots and, now that you know about them, you will be sure to keep the ol' body machine in the medical

"garage," where it belongs, under a doctor's care?

I think a serious mental block with many of us is the unfortunate reference to the periodic health examination as a physical examination. You may have noticed I call it "health examination." My choice of words is quite deliberate.

Perhaps the greatest single benefit of the health examination is the face-to-face consultation with the doctor. This is a counseling period that follows the physical procedure. It's your greatest opportunity to unburden yourself, to discuss every problem and every fear that may be on your mind. Time after time, many people, especially those in the so-called "stress" occupations, are able to function better because they feel much better after having had some reassurance from their doctor.

TO HAVE YOUR normal sense of well-being restored, even if nothing organically wrong has been uncovered at your health examination, is no trifling matter. After all, don't you agree that a sense of well-being should be the principal objective of intelligent health maintenance?

Let me tell you about a 45-year-old woman, a department-store buyer, who consistently evaded the opportunity of taking cost-free health examinations provided annually by her employer. Every time she was asked why she never took advantage of them, she stammered and stuttered and made it obvious that she was hiding something. Her employer decided to do something about it.

His interest was more than curiosity. He planned to promote the buyer into a position of great responsibility, and he wanted to be sure his confidence and money would be invested in a healthy woman.

The employer was brutally frank with the buyer. He told her that he looked upon her promotion as an investment for the company and that he wanted to be sure the investment would pay handsome

dividends for many years. Finally, the woman showed up for her examination. Physically, she was in excellent health. But emotionally, she wasn't.

She had never taken a health examination because she had an almost neurotic fear of cancer. A number of immediate relatives had died of cancer within a fairly short time, and she had developed tremendous anxieties over a similar fate for herself.

But after a long talk with the doctor, she left his office a new woman. The employer called the doctor a few days later and wanted to know what sort of "black magic" he had used "to give this woman the looks and bounce of a kid just let out of school."

A simple routine in your doctor's office may take not more than 20 to 30 minutes. It may include an examination of your eyes, ears, nose, throat, lungs, heart, abdomen, and reflexes, a hemoglobin test, and a urinalysis. He may also ask that you take a chest X ray. In the absence of specific symptoms, this sort of examination may be adequate for many persons.

On the other hand, there are those who need to check into clinics for several days and go through a great variety of complex tests, for which the total bill may come to several hundred dollars. Even this may not be the "complete" or "ideal" physical.

We in the medical profession have to be practical as well as theoretical. We have to be reasonable. We have to set up certain procedures and techniques to do the most good for the greatest number in a manner that gives us some reasonable yardsticks or indicators of your health.

When it is possible and feasible to take more time to carry out additional physical tests, we will do it. That is why there is a growing number of medical clinics and group-practice headquarters set up to do virtually nothing but periodic health examinations that may take several hours or an entire day.

Of course, if the examination should disclose

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