UNITED BROTHERS OF LOS ANGELES

THE HEALTH PLAYBOOK

A Brother's Guide to Every Screening That Matters, Decade by Decade

Los Angeles Edition | weareubla.org

We don't teach Black men to survive. We equip them to thrive.

How to Use This Playbook

Black men die from prostate cancer at twice the rate of white men, and too many of our losses come from diseases that were knowable, catchable, and treatable early. The pattern is not a mystery. It is a delivery problem: men who were never told what to check, at what age, or where to go. This playbook fixes the delivery. One short page per decade of a man's life, the standing rules that never change, the five numbers to know by heart, and the doors in Los Angeles that are already open. Keep it. Work it. Hand it to a brother.

A note on the guidance: the ages here follow the major national guidelines, including the American Cancer Society, the Prostate Cancer Foundation, and the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force. They are a starting point for a conversation with your own doctor, not a substitute for one. Your family history can move any of these dates earlier, which is why the most important page in this playbook might be the family history worksheet near the end.

The Decades at a Glance

Every checkup and screening in this playbook, on one page. Your family history can move any of these dates earlier. When in doubt, ask your doctor.

Decade	The Checkups and Screenings
Your 20s: Build the Baseline	Blood pressure every year; baseline cholesterol panel; HIV and STI testing; dental cleaning and eye check; HPV vaccine through age 26; learn and write down your family history.
Your 30s: Watch the Quiet Numbers	Blood pressure every year; cholesterol on your doctor's schedule; diabetes screening from 35 if at risk, earlier with family history; kidney function if you have high blood pressure or diabetes; prostate baseline conversation at 40 to 45 if your father or brother was diagnosed.

Your 40s: The Decade That Decides	Prostate screening conversation at 45, earlier with strong family history; colon cancer screening starting at 45; blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes, and kidney checks on schedule; comprehensive eye exams from 40 for glaucoma.
Your 50s: Stay Ahead of It	Prostate screening decisions with your doctor; colon screening continues; lung cancer CT scan if you have a 20 pack-year smoking history; shingles vaccine at 50; pneumonia vaccine at 50.
Your 60s and Beyond: Protect the Years You Earned	Colon screening through 75; one-time aneurysm ultrasound at 65 to 75 if you ever smoked; RSV vaccine conversation in your mid-70s; hearing, vision, memory, and bone health checks; vaccines kept current.

The Standing Rules, Every Decade

A doctor before you need one. Have a primary care doctor who knows your name and your baseline while you are well. The first visit should never be an emergency room introduction.

Blood pressure, every year. High blood pressure is quiet and it is the engine behind strokes, heart failure, and kidney damage. Get it checked at least once a year, more often if it runs high, and know the number, not just the vibe.

Move, sleep, and say it out loud. Regular movement, real sleep, and honest talk about what is weighing on you are not soft extras. They are load-bearing. The mental health page of this playbook is not an appendix. Read it like a screening, because it is one.

Vaccines are maintenance. A flu shot every year, COVID boosters as recommended, and the age-specific vaccines flagged in each decade below. Maintenance is cheaper than repair, for cars and for men.

THE TWENTIES

Build the Baseline

The Checks. Blood pressure yearly. A baseline cholesterol panel. HIV and sexually transmitted infection testing as part of routine care. A dental cleaning and an eye check. Skin awareness:

new or changing moles get looked at. And the HPV vaccine, which protects against several cancers, is recommended through age 26 and can be discussed with a doctor up to 45.

The Conversation. This is the decade to learn your family's story while the storytellers are still here. Ask your father, uncles, and grandfathers directly: heart disease, prostate cancer, diabetes, kidney disease, and at what ages. What you learn can pull your own screening dates years earlier.

> **Your Move.** Write down your baseline numbers and your family history this month. Both fit on one page, and that page will steer your doctor's advice for the next forty years.

THE THIRTIES

Watch the Quiet Numbers

The Checks. Blood pressure yearly, cholesterol on your doctor's schedule, and diabetes screening: national guidelines call for testing adults 35 to 70 whose weight puts them at risk, and earlier when diabetes runs in the family. Kidney function belongs on the radar for any brother with high blood pressure or diabetes, because kidney disease in Black men often arrives silently and early.

The Conversation. If your father or brother was diagnosed with prostate cancer, especially before 65, your prostate conversation moves up: the Prostate Cancer Foundation supports a baseline PSA blood test between 40 and 45, and earlier discussion for men with strong family history. Know your number before the decade turns.

> **Your Move.** If you have never had a full panel as an adult, this is the decade to stop guessing. One appointment, one blood draw, and you own your numbers.

THE FORTIES

The Decade That Decides

The Checks. This is the highest-leverage decade in the playbook. Prostate: the American Cancer Society says Black men should start the screening conversation at 45, because our risk is the highest of any group and early detection is the whole game: survival runs 90 to 100 percent caught early. Colon: screening for colorectal cancer starts at 45 for every adult, by colonoscopy or stool-based tests your doctor recommends. Plus blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes, and kidney checks on schedule, and regular comprehensive eye exams from 40, because glaucoma strikes Black adults earlier and harder.

The Conversation. Come to this conversation with your family history page in hand. A father diagnosed at 52 is not trivia. It is a clinical fact that changes what your doctor should do and when.

> **Your Move.** If you turn 45 this year, book two things before your birthday: the prostate conversation and the colon screening. Those two appointments, kept, remove the two most common ways this decade goes wrong.

THE FIFTIES

Stay Ahead of It

The Checks. Prostate screening decisions continue with your doctor, informed by your PSA history. Colon screening continues. Lung: if you have a significant smoking history, ask about the low-dose CT lung scan, recommended for adults 50 to 80 with at least a 20 pack-year history who smoke or quit within the last 15 years. Vaccines step up: shingles vaccine at 50, and pneumonia vaccination now begins at 50 under current CDC guidance.

The Conversation. Bring a list. Every medication, every supplement, every symptom you have been waving off. The fifties reward men who report early and punish men who tough it out. Toughing it out is not a screening strategy.

> **Your Move.** Make the annual physical genuinely annual. Same month every year, tied to something you never forget, like your birthday or the start of football season.

THE SIXTIES AND BEYOND

Protect the Years You Earned

The Checks. Colon screening continues through 75. A one-time abdominal aortic aneurysm ultrasound is recommended for men 65 to 75 who have ever smoked; it is painless and it prevents a rupture that rarely gives a warning. Prostate conversations continue based on your health and history. Ask about the RSV vaccine in your mid-seventies. Add hearing, vision, memory, and bone health to the annual review, and keep the vaccines current, including pneumonia and shingles if you missed them at 50.

The Conversation. Bring somebody. A son, a brother, a friend from the block. Older men who stay connected to a doctor, and to each other, live longer than men who go quiet. The appointment is medicine. So is the company.

> **Your Move.** Do a yearly paperwork pass with your family: your doctors, your medications, your wishes, where the documents live. That is not morbidity. That is leadership, and it is the same estate discipline our Financial Literacy pillar teaches.

Know Your Five

Five numbers tell most of the story. Ask for them, write them down, track them year to year: (1) blood pressure, (2) blood sugar, measured as A1C, (3) cholesterol, (4) kidney function, measured as eGFR, and (5) your PSA once you reach the conversation years. A brother who knows his five is a brother no system can surprise.

Hurt and Heal Out Loud: The Mental Health Page

Depression in Black men often wears work clothes: exhaustion, irritability, a short fuse, a body that aches. Anxiety gets called stress until it runs the house. None of it is weakness, and none of it has to be carried alone or in silence. If you are in crisis, call or text 988, the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, any hour of any day. For the longer work, therapy is a tool like any other: ask your doctor, your pastor, or a brother who has gone. UBLA's position is the one we print everywhere: mental health support where a Black man can hurt and heal without shame, in rooms built for him. This playbook counts as one of those rooms.

The Family History Worksheet

Fill this in once, update it at every family gathering, and take a photo of it for your phone. For each: father, mother, brothers, sisters, grandparents. What conditions did they have: heart disease, prostate or other cancers, diabetes, kidney disease, stroke? At what age were they diagnosed? At what age did they pass, and of what? These answers are the map your doctor uses to set your personal screening ages. In many families, this page will be the most valuable medical document a man owns.

Open Doors in Los Angeles

HRSA Health Center Locator. Federally funded health centers across Los Angeles offer primary care and screenings on sliding-scale fees. Find one near you through the Health Resources and Services Administration locator, listed on our website's Health pillar resources.

Charles Drew University. South Los Angeles' own health sciences university, training doctors for our community and anchoring care where our community lives.

American Cancer Society. Plain-language guidance on prostate screening: what to know and when to talk to your doctor, linked from our Health pillar resources.

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. Call or text 988, free and confidential, 24 hours a day.

And UBLA itself: our Health pillar is building toward free community screening clinics and clinic days here in Los Angeles, delivered where brothers already gather. Watch Thrive and weareubla.org for dates.

A Closing Word

None of this requires wealth, connections, or luck. It requires a calendar, a blood test, and the refusal to go quiet about your own body. The men we lose earliest are rarely lost to diseases nobody understands. They are lost to appointments nobody made. Make the appointments, brothers. You cannot build wealth, lead a community, or invent the future if you are not alive and well to do it. Health is where thriving begins.

The Health Playbook is a program resource of United Brothers of Los Angeles (UBLA), the Health pillar's companion to Civic School. It is educational material, not medical advice; screening decisions belong to you and your doctor.

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