



Sandoval County Senior Program Administration

CENTER LOCATION

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All Sites individualize their newsletters to their local area information, activities calendars and games.

Health & Wellness

5 Tips for Men's Health Month

By: Vikil Girdhar, MD

June is Men's Health Month, a time to increase awareness of preventable health problems and encourage early detection and treatment of disease among men and boys. Research and studies continue to show a significant difference when it comes to the health of men compared to women. While these differences are often associated with certain behaviors, it also helps pinpoint major issues that need to be addressed.

Let's take a minute to look at some facts:

1. According to the CDC, the average lifespan for men is about five years less than women, and over the years there has been a gradual increase in this gap.
2. The top three causes of death for men include heart disease, cancer, and unintentional injuries.
3. Men are almost twice as likely as women to die of a heart attack and significantly more likely to die of cancers as compared to women.
4. Men are also less likely to undergo treatment for mental health conditions such as depression, resulting in nearly a 4x increased likelihood of committing suicide.

There isn't one particular reason for this lifespan and health disparity, but there is a group of factors that contribute to the cause. A higher percentage of men do not have healthcare coverage this, in turn, leads to a lower use of healthcare resources, as men are less likely to schedule routine doctor's appointments. When compared to women, men make about half as many doctor visits for preventive care. They also tend to be involved and employed in more dangerous occupations such as mining, firefighting, and construction.

One of the most problematic behaviors contributing to this lifespan disparity is the non-help-seeking nature amongst men. Statistics show that women are 33% more likely to visit their doctor and 100% better at maintaining screening and preventive services than men. Preventive visits are essential to improving everyone's health, regardless of their age or gender.

Here are five recommendations for men to help them stay on top of their game.

Health & Wellness continued

1. Stay updated on your vaccinations! Now that we are recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is crucial to be up to date on vaccinations. Your primary care provider (PCP) will help keep you on track as there are many that are recommended based on age. Not only do immunizations help you stay healthy, but they keep your body's immune system functioning to its highest level. Vaccines are usually recommended at the time of your annual visit with your PCP.

2. Do your screenings! Your PCP will do screening labs if you have certain risk factors, such as family history or weight changes. Screenings for diabetes, thyroid disease, liver issues, anemia, and cholesterol are part of the routine bloodwork often done at the doctor's office. Men are typically given prostate exams at the age of 40, which is done annually to make sure no enlargement or masses are present which may cause complications down the line. A colonoscopy is another recommendation to assess the risk for colon cancer by age 50 (or sooner if there is family history). A lung CT scan is another common practice for those ages 50 or over who currently smoke or have smoked in the past to check for lung cancer. Also, during your visits with your PCP, depression screenings are done to make sure that you are not at a higher risk of developing major depression. They will also make sure that routine blood pressure and weight/height checks are done and are in the normal range.

3. Lower your stress! Statistics show that men have more difficulty handling stress compared to women. This may be because women typically have better social networks, or a circle of friends and they are able to confide in them. The male mentality often tends to avoid discussing their feelings and as a result, are less likely to disclose such issues with their PCP, resulting in many cases of major depression/anxiety being undiagnosed. Stress itself is linked to higher blood pressure and body weight, so it's important to take time to focus on activities that will help relieve stress.

4. Watch your risky behaviors! Limiting alcohol consumption and not smoking are almost routinely advised by your PCP, as they can result in liver disease, cirrhosis, and alcohol dependence. Smoking contributes to a wide variety of cancers and is one factor that is the most changeable. Nicotine replacement therapy options can help you quit smoking; some examples include Chantix, nicotine patches, and nicotine gum. There are many resources and programs that can help you reduce your alcohol intake, such as counseling or Alcoholics Anonymous, which your PCP can refer you for. If you're sexually active, it's important to routinely be tested for sexually transmitted diseases and practice safe sex. It's also important to avoid illicit drug or non-prescription medication use. Lastly men, please use your seatbelts and wear helmets if you are riding a motorcycle!

Health & Wellness continued

5. Watch what you eat! As the saying goes, you are what you eat. Eating large amounts of processed foods or foods with a high amount of sodium (salt) are main causes for obesity. Obesity is linked to increased occurrences of heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, and breathing issues. Focus on lean proteins and foods that provide good nutrition and a large number of vitamins. Some examples include chicken, turkey, fish, Greek yogurt, beans, and lentils. Foods with high fat and/or carbohydrate content should only be eaten in moderation; examples include white bread, pasta, pizza, fried foods, pastries or cookies, processed meats and cheeses, and most fast-food meals. Exercise goes a long way, so working out three to four times a week for about 30 minutes will help your body and your mind.

The men in our lives are important! This Men's Health Month let's focus on helping them optimize their health. There are several factors that need to be taken into consideration, but these five tips are a great place to start. Routine doctor's appointments and going for preventive well-visits are another simple step men can take to feel better and to help reduce the health disparity between men and women.

Nutrition

Nutrition for Older Men

The Difference a Healthy Eating Style Can Make

Eating right can help keep your body and mind sharp and extend quality of life.. Older men need:

Calcium and Vitamin D

Older adults need more vitamin D and calcium than younger adults to help maintain strong and healthy bones. Calcium-rich foods include low-fat and fat-free dairy products, like milk and yogurt, as well as fortified foods and beverages, such as some cereals, non-dairy milks and 100% fruit juices. Dark green leafy vegetables and canned fish with soft bones are also sources of this important nutrient. Foods that provide vitamin D include fatty fish, like salmon, eggs and fortified foods and beverages. Three servings of dairy are recommended every day. If you take a calcium supplement or multivitamin, be sure to choose one that contains vitamin D.

Nutrition continued

Dietary Fiber

Fiber helps keep bowel functions normal and may influence digestive health by promoting the survival of good bacteria. Higher intakes of dietary fiber also have been shown to help decrease the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes and heart disease. Many fiber-rich foods take longer to digest and can help keep you full longer. Men older than 50 need 30 grams of dietary fiber a day; good sources include whole grains, fruits, vegetables, beans and lentils. Try to make at least half your grains whole grains. Oatmeal, whole-wheat breads and pastas and whole-grain cereals can all be good sources. For products with a Nutrition Facts Label, such as cereals and breads, choose foods with at least 3 grams of dietary fiber per serving. Also aim to eat a variety of fruits and vegetables throughout your day.

Potassium

Increasing potassium intake along with decreasing sodium (salt) may lower your risk of high blood pressure. Sources of potassium include fruits and vegetables, such as bananas, sweet potatoes, spinach and white beans. Choose low-sodium foods and replace salt with herbs and spices to reduce your sodium intake.

Healthy Fats

Most of the fats you consume should come from heart-healthy unsaturated fats. Try extra-virgin olive oil, canola oil, walnuts, almonds and avocados. Saturated fat, which comes from sources such as meat and full-fat dairy, should be limited to less than 10% of calories. Make Calories Count

Most older men cannot eat the way they did in their 20s and maintain a healthy weight. As men age, they typically become less active, lose muscle and gain fat. All of these things combined can cause metabolism to slow down. More physical activity is needed to keep metabolism up.

How many calories you need each day depends on your age, gender and activity level. The daily calorie needs for men over the age of 50 are approximately:

2,000 to 2,200 calories if not active.

2,200 to 2,400 calories if moderately active.

2,400 to 2,800 calories if regularly active.

Nutrition continued

Despite needing fewer calories, the same or higher amounts of nutrients are required when we age. Including wholesome foods on a regular basis, including fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, low-fat or fat-free sources of dairy, whole grains and healthy plant-based fats will provide those nutrients and help to control calories.

It also will help to balance your calorie intake by getting at least 30 minutes of physical activity most days of the week. Being physically active helps older men rev up metabolism, build and strengthen muscles, maintain bone health and increase energy levels. Physical activity also helps to lift your spirits.

Staying Active

How Men Can Stay Active

Exercise may not be the magic youth potion for men, but it's darn close. Sit less, move more, live longer.

As you age, blood vessels stiffen, reflexes slow, and the scale moves up a few pounds every year. Most or all of that extra weight is fat. Staying physically active can help you stay leaner and ward off health problems like heart disease, the No. 1 killer of men.

Here are the best ways to stay on the move in your middle years and beyond.

Muscle Matters

As the decades roll by, you lose up to half of your muscle. That's why you need strength training. You work with weights or resistance to stay strong. You can try:

- Weightlifting
- Elastic bands
- Hand dumbbells and kettle bells
- Body weight (pushups, pull ups, squats, belly crunches)

Work out all your major muscle groups -- chest, shoulders, arms, abs, hips, and legs -- two or more days a week. Do at least one set of 8-12 reps with a couple of minutes rest in between.

Tip: Keep the pauses between exercises short so you can get strength training and a heart-pumping cardio workout in one shot.

Staying Active Continued

Get Aerobic

It means “with oxygen.” Working out hard enough to speed up your breathing helps offset the effects of aging. It can whittle fat in the gut, where men often store it.

If your joints and bones are sturdy, try:

- Jogging
- Basketball
- Tennis

Gentler aerobic options include:

- Walking
- Elliptical machine
- Low-impact or water aerobics
- Swimming
- Biking

Aim for at least 30 minutes of exercise 5 days a week. Your pace should be moderate so that you can talk, but not sing. Even a lighter workout helps.

Tip. Build cardio into your day. Take the stairs. Walk your dog. Even yardwork, gardening, and fast-paced housework count.

Stretch It Out

Keep stiffness at bay and stay limber. Greater flexibility means healthier muscles, better balance, and less joint pain. Try:

- Yoga
- Pilates
- Arm circles, quad stretches, and other at-home exercises

Stretch every day if you can. But start with at least 2 days a week.

Tip. Always finish off your aerobic or strength workouts with stretches.