

## June is Men's Health Month

On average, men are less healthy and live about five years less than women. More than half of premature deaths in men are preventable. For every year of their life since birth, American males have a higher death rate and more chronic diseases than women. When it comes to comparing our five leading causes of death – heart disease, cancer, stroke, chronic lung disease and accidents – men die at rates 40 to 220 percent higher than women do.

A variety of biological, social and behavioral factors may be to blame for these statistics. Men have more testosterone than women which tends to impair cholesterol metabolism, while women have more estrogen which has the opposite effect. Men tend to suffer more work-related stress and have smaller networks of friends and social support to help protect them from mental and physical problems. Men tend to engage in more risky behavior, aggression and violence. Men are more likely to smoke or abuse alcohol and other substances compared to women. Men are less weight/diet conscious than women and tend to exercise less often than women. But the underlying problem is that men suffer from the “real men don't see doctors” syndrome.



Why do men pay more attention to a flashing warning light in their car than to physical symptoms in their body? Possible reasons why men avoid doctor visits may include busy schedules, high cost, the embarrassing possibility of the digital rectal exam, or being afraid that the doctor might find something wrong with them. Many companies now pay for an annual physical exam, yet this benefit is often underutilized by both sexes. It's important to establish a good relationship with a doctor you know and trust and who knows your medical history so he/she can choose steps for prevention that meet your individual needs.

Must-have medical tests that every man should have performed routinely:

- Blood Pressure
- Lipid Panel (different types of cholesterol)
- Colonoscopy at age 50 (or sooner if symptoms or strong family history)
- Immunizations – tetanus shot every 10 years, annual flu shot and pneumococcal vaccine once at age 65
- Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) and digital rectal exam – usually done starting at age 50 (or sooner if symptoms or family history)
- Blood Glucose test for diabetes
- Skin Cancer screening

If you identify any of the above symptoms, get to the doctor immediately. You can buy a new car once the new sheen wears off or you use it for a number of years, but you only get one body and it has to last a lifetime!

Source: *Men's Health Network*

Here are a few warning signs in your body that you should look out for:

- Changes in bowel or bladder habits including changes in color of urine or stool
- Impotence or erectile dysfunction
- Persistent backaches
- Changes in warts or moles
- Unusual lumps
- Recurrent chest pains or headaches
- Nagging cough
- Unexplained weight loss
- Extreme fatigue
- Bleeding that won't stop
- Depression