

Healthy Steps to Men's Health

From your friends at Blue Care Network

Guys don't always get it

How old are you?

If you're in your 20s or 30s, you may be concerned about physical fitness. If you're in your 40s or 50s, you may be giving more thought to your heart health and cholesterol levels. As you get older, you may worry about prostate cancer or a chronic health condition. With each stage of life, there are health risks and conditions to contend with. Even if you're in perfect health, you still need these checkups and screenings:

- **Regular checkups**

Regular checkups are a good way to keep track of your health.

This is also a good time to get advice from your doctor about your diet, exercise and other steps to take. If you're over 18, you should have a routine physical every one to five years, depending on your health risks. Talk to your doctor about recommendations for what is right for you.

- **Cholesterol and blood pressure tests**

Get your cholesterol and blood pressure checked regularly.

Maintaining healthy cholesterol levels and blood pressure can help prevent other health problems, including cardiac disease, heart attacks and strokes.

- **Colorectal cancer exam**

An internal exam of your colon is important in detecting early colorectal cancer. Tests may include a colonoscopy, fecal occult blood testing or double contrast barium enema. Check with your doctor to see which test is right for you.

- **Prostate cancer screening**

The American Cancer Society recommends that doctors offer prostate cancer screening to most men beginning at age 50.

Prostate screening includes both a PSA test and digital rectal exam.

- **Diabetes testing**

If you're age 45 or older and at risk for type 2 diabetes, have your blood sugar measured every one to two years. Risk factors for type 2 diabetes include being overweight, being inactive and having a family history of diabetes. Also, if you have high blood pressure or high cholesterol, it's important to be tested for diabetes, since diabetes significantly increases your already higher risk of heart attack.

Men's health is often women's work

It's a fact that women — mothers, wives, sisters and daughters — are usually the ones who monitor the family's health. Women are also quicker to see a doctor when they develop symptoms.

In contrast, men are more likely to ignore symptoms and hope they go away. By the time they see a doctor, symptoms may be severe or harder to manage.

Women live 5.2 years longer on average than men. Could men's avoidance of doctors have anything to do with it? The answer is Yes!

Men's attitudes may have come from a father who avoided doctors or a fear of appearing "weak." Men also talk less about their health.

If you're a man, you can learn from women that getting recommended screenings and checkups can lead to a longer, healthier life. Early detection and treatment can prevent serious illnesses such as stroke or heart attack. And detecting a tumor early can make the difference in whether cancer is treatable.

Puzzle

What did your doctor say?

Match the type of doctor on the left to the phrase on the right, and draw a line connecting the statement to the doctor.

Cardiologist	Sticks and stones may break my bones.
Dermatologist	I've got my eye on you!
Endocrinologist	Gland to meet you.
Obstetrician	Hear no evil. Speak no evil.
Otolaryngologist	You get under my skin.
Ophthalmologist	If you were in my shoes...
Orthopedist	Oh baby!
Podiatrist	You gotta have heart.

(Answers on this page.)

Diagnostic information

Reduce prostate cancer risk

A few simple changes can make a big difference in lowering prostate cancer risk:

- Eat lots of fruits and vegetables high in lycopene, such as pink grapefruit, cooked tomatoes, guavas and papayas.
- Reduce the fat in your diet. A high-fat diet has been linked to a greater risk of prostate cancer.
- Exercise regularly. Studies have suggested that men who exercise regularly are at lower risk for prostate cancer.

It's also important to get an overall picture of your health. Check out our "Resources" section on this page to find out how.

Not for women only: depression in men

A man might not openly cry or talk about feeling down. But he can still be depressed. Depression is common in men, but can go undiagnosed because men may discount the seriousness of their symptoms or not recognize them as signs of depression. If you're feeling detached and alone... if work or hobbies don't interest you... if you have trouble sleeping or feel tired frequently, see your doctor.

Behavioral health services are available to members 24 hours a day, seven days a week by calling the number on the back of your ID card. No referral is necessary. A behavioral health specialist can answer your questions or refer you for individual help.

Resources

Take care of yourself

BCN covers annual exams and screenings and offers guidelines for them based on the latest clinical research. To find out what's recommended for you, go to MiBCN.com/guidelines.

It's a fact...

According to the Centers for Disease Control, the leading causes of death for men in the United States are:

- Heart disease
- Cancer
- Stroke
- Accidents
- Lung disease (including emphysema and chronic bronchitis)

Tips to live by . . .

You can reduce your risk for four of these (heart disease, cancer, stroke, lung disease) by making these lifestyle changes:

- Quit smoking.
- Control your blood pressure and blood cholesterol.
- Get active.
- Lose excess weight.
- Reduce stress.

Answers to What did your doctor say?
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