

Men's Health: A Guide to Living Long, Strong and Well

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Enjoy life more. Enhance your role as a productive employee and family member. Maintain your mental and physical function and independence. Even improve your life expectancy. Feel better today and tomorrow. These are the promises of good health.

This guide gives practical advice to help men defend against illness. It provides eating tips and ideas about other habits to maintain health. This guide also describes six specific diseases that threaten men's health.

It's true that men and women generally view their health differently. Men are less likely to focus on their overall health, the wear and tear occurring in their bodies, or on symptoms of disease. They are more reluctant to visit their health care providers. But men who find out how to defend against illness and who are knowledgeable about their health can live long, strong and well.

Osteoporosis – Problems with weak and brittle bones

Osteoporosis is a not just a women's disease. About two million men living in the United States have osteoporosis and another 12 million are at risk. This bone disease is both under-diagnosed and underreported in men.

Male risk factors for osteoporosis include older age; heredity; Caucasian ethnicity (white males are at greater risk); prolonged use of medications such as steroids and aluminum-containing antacids (look at the ingredients label to find out if the product has aluminum); smoking; excessive alcohol use; lack of dietary calcium or physical activity; and chronic diseases of the kidneys, lungs, stomach and intestines.

How can a man keep his bones strong?

- Regularly do weight-bearing physical activities, such as walking, jogging, climbing stairs and weight lifting or resistance training. (Swimming, for instance, is not weight bearing.)
- Get vitamin D, either by spending 10-15 minutes a day outside in the sunshine or by getting between 400 to 1,000 (but no more than 2,000) international units, or IUs, of vitamin D in foods or supplements. (Another good reason to go fishing or play golf.)
- Get enough calcium. Men up to 50 years of age should get 1,000 mg of calcium a day, while men over age 51 should get 1,200 mg. Good calcium sources include most dairy products, calcium-fortified foods and beverages, such as certain brands of fruit juices and cereals, and calcium supplements.
- Improve other lifestyle behaviors to reduce bone loss. For example, quit smoking and don't use alcohol to excess.

How can a busy guy easily get enough dietary calcium?

- Drink three cups of milk a day, with meals or as a snack.
- Mix milk with hot chocolate powder or soups instead of using water.
- Add cheese to sandwiches, salads and casseroles.
- Eat pudding, yogurt or cheese as a snack or dessert.
- Drink calcium-fortified orange juice.

Cardiovascular Disease – Problems with the heart and blood vessels

Heart disease and stroke are the leading causes of death among males of all ethnic groups in the United States. They cause more than one in every four deaths of American men. In 2002, more than 32 million men had some kind of cardiovascular disease.

A man's chances for getting heart disease and stroke increase if he has high blood pressure or high cholesterol, is physically inactive or overweight, and if he smokes. Healthy eating and physical activity are important for preventing and treating heart disease and stroke.

How can a man eat smart to protect his heart and blood vessels?

- Most men need four to six cups of fruits and vegetables each day. Grab the most colorful ones more often. Get them fresh, canned, frozen or dried, with juice just occasionally.
- Males should get three or more ounce-equivalents of whole grains every day, such as oats, popcorn, whole wheat cereals and breads, and brown or wild rice.
- Most men would do their hearts and blood vessels a favor if they ate smaller portions of meat. Just five to seven ounces

of cooked meat (not including bones or fat) is the recommended daily amount for men who need 1,600 to 3,000 calories a day to maintain weight. What does five to seven ounces of cooked meat look like? For example, half of a small chicken breast, or cooked meat that's about the size of a deck of cards, counts as three ounces.

- Choose lean meats, then trim and discard any visible fat. Don't eat the skin from chicken or turkey. Eat few high-fat meats (such as regular hamburger, bacon, pepperoni, hot dogs, bologna, sausages and fatty cuts of meat). Drain the fat that cooks out of meats.
- Be choosy about the way your food is cooked. Pick foods that have been grilled, microwaved, boiled, broiled, baked, roasted or pan-fried without added oil or fat.
- Look at the Nutrition Facts label of the foods you eat frequently. Limit how many grams of saturated or solid fat that you eat. Choose foods with little, if any, trans fat. Men should get most of their dietary fat as unsaturated fats. These are the healthful fats found in fish, nuts, seeds and vegetable oils.
- Get plenty of omega-3 fats. See page 5 for more about these healthy fats.
- Switch to fat-free or low-fat milk. You will live to love it. Choose fat-free or reduced-fat yogurt, cheeses, dips, sour cream, ice cream and other desserts to reduce the amount of unhealthy saturated fats.
- Compare Nutrition Facts labels and choose brands with fewer grams of total fat, less cholesterol and less sodium per serving.
- Choose and prepare foods with little added salt. Try to eat less than 2,300 mg of sodium each day. If you have high blood pressure, are African American, or are middle-aged or older, you would be smart to get even less sodium and salt. Men in these groups are advised to eat no more than 1,500 mg of sodium per day and to get more potassium (about 4,700 mg) in their foods.

What else can a man do to keep his heart and blood vessels vigorous?

- If you smoke, quit.
- Live more actively. Get moderate or vigorous physical activity that adds up to 30 minutes or more on most days. To further decrease your risk for heart disease and to avoid gaining excess weight, get about one hour (60 minutes) of moderately or vigorously intense physical activity on most days of the week. The one hour of activity can be done during several shorter time periods each day, if you prefer. For instance, to accumulate one hour of walking each day, you could walk the dog in the morning and evening for 20 minutes each time and walk with a friend for 20 minutes during your lunch break.
- About seven out of ten American men are overweight. If you are in this category, you will get health benefits from losing just ten pounds – and keeping it off. The best way to lose weight is to eat fewer calories and to move more. To lose weight, focus on fruits, vary your veggies and make half your grains whole. Get your calcium-rich foods and beverages and choose lean protein foods. Reduce your intake of foods high in sugar, saturated fat, or sodium.

Prostate Cancer – Problems with the male reproductive system that makes the fluid that carries sperm

After skin cancer, prostate cancer is the most common type of cancer among American men. Approximately one of every six men in the United States will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in his lifetime.

Reduce the threat of prostate cancer by lowering lifestyle risk factors and by early detection and treatment. What factors increase the chances for prostate cancer? They include: older age, having a father or

brother who had the disease, being African American, eating a diet high in animal fat (found in meats and high-fat dairy products), eating few fruits and vegetables, being overweight and getting little physical activity.

What foods help reduce the risk of getting prostate cancer?

- Eat more fruits and vegetables.
- Choose red- and pink-colored fruits and vegetables often. Lycopene is one of the beneficial substances found in red- and pink-colored fruits and vegetables. Frequently eating foods with lycopene reduces the risk of getting prostate cancer. Lycopene is found in cooked tomato-based products, raw tomatoes, pink guava, watermelon, papaya, red grapefruit and dried apricots. Lycopene is absorbed better from cooked tomatoes (such as in pizza sauce, spaghetti sauce, catsup and other tomato sauces and tomato paste) than from fresh red foods. (Note: Lycopene supplements do not seem to provide the same benefit as eating foods containing lycopene.)
- Pick strong-flavored foods including onions, garlic, scallions, chives, shallots and leeks. Allium is one of the substances in these plant foods that may reduce the risk of prostate and other kinds of cancer.
- Eat three or more cups of cooked dry beans each week. Isoflavones are substances found primarily in cooked dry beans, including soybeans, chickpeas and lentils; and soy products, such as tofu and soy milk. They may slow down the growth of prostate cancer cells and improve prostate health. Evidence is limited so far, but these foods are healthful for other reasons, too.

What are some easy ways to eat more of these prostate-friendly foods?

- Order extra marinara sauce and add it to pizza or spaghetti.
- Add catsup, tomatoes and onion slices to hamburgers, sandwiches and salads.
- Order extra salsa with tacos and nachos.
- Eat watermelon slices, red grapefruit, or other red or pink fruits with breakfast or as snacks.
- Add crushed garlic and onion to sauces and stir-fry dishes.
- Add cooked dry beans to salads or choose soups made with them.

Colon Cancer – Problems with the large bowel in the digestive system

Colon and rectal cancer is the fourth most common cancer in men, following skin, prostate and lung cancer. About one in three deaths from colon and rectal cancer could be avoided if men regularly got a screening test.

Four screening tests are recommended for this type of cancer. These tests include: a fecal occult blood test (checks for hidden blood in the stool), sigmoidoscopy (where your doctor checks for growths in your rectum and colon), double contrast barium enema (an x-ray of your colon) and colonoscopy (similar to a sigmoidoscopy but more thorough).

What increases men's chances of getting colon cancer?

- Older age – more than nine in ten people with colon cancer are 50 years and older.
- Family history of colon cancer among parents, brothers and sisters. However, three out of four people with colon cancer have no family history of it.

- Personal history of colorectal polyps, chronic inflammatory bowel disease or both.
- A diet low in fruits and vegetables and high in fat, with most of the fat coming from animal food products rather than plant foods.
- Not getting much physical activity.
- Obesity.
- Smoking.
- Excess alcohol intake.
- Diabetes.

What can a man do to reduce his risk for developing colon cancer?

- Eat three or more cups of a variety of fruits and vegetables every day.
- Include three or more cups of cooked dried beans per week in your meals.
- At least half of the time, choose whole grains instead of processed or refined grains. Also, limit sugar intake.
- Eat fish frequently.
- Limit your intake of red meat and meat that is smoked, cured, or high in fat or sodium.
- Get at least 30 minutes of daily physical activity on five or more days each week. Your risk of colon cancer may be reduced further if you get 45 minutes of vigorous activity on five or more days each week.
- Take a daily multivitamin and mineral supplement with folate, and a supplement with vitamin D and calcium.

Depression – A serious medical problem with a man's mental health

Depression commonly occurs in men of all ages. About one out of 14 American men, or more than six million, have depression each year. Men account for only one in ten

diagnosed cases. Changes in the body's chemistry or stressful changes in life, such as serious illness, can cause male depression. Depression can be treated successfully to restore productivity and enjoyment of life.

Although many men have depression, it's often not recognized. Some men deny having problems with depression because they believe that they should be strong and not express emotions. Depression leads some men to withdraw from socializing with friends and family, or to use alcohol excessively. Men suffering from depression may lack sexual desire. They are likely to describe their symptoms as being physical, such as feeling tired, experiencing headaches or not sleeping well. Other signs of depression are difficulty concentrating or remembering, or feeling irritable, pessimistic, anxious, or sad most of the time.

Depression is not part of the aging process. Talk with your health care provider to learn about medication and other therapies. Along with treatment, increase your physical activity and eat more of certain nutrients and foods to help relieve depression.

What nutrients help support healthy mental functioning in men?

- **Folate** – This vitamin can increase the effectiveness of other treatments for depression. The best food sources of folate include cereals fortified with folate, liver, cooked dry beans, orange juice and green vegetables such as okra, spinach and asparagus. Taking a multivitamin that contains folate is another way to get this nutrient. The recommended dietary intake for folate is 400 micrograms per day.
- **Omega-3 fats** – These heart-healthy polyunsaturated fats also may help improve mood and relieve depression. The recommended dietary allowance for

adult men is 1.6 milligrams of omega-3 fat per day. Good food sources of omega-3 fats include cold water fish, flaxseed, walnuts and canola oil. To meet your need for omega-3 fats, eat three servings a week of cold water fish (such as jack, chub or Atlantic mackerel; salmon, herring, tuna, lake trout, flounder and sardines). The Food and Drug Administration recommends eating no more than 12 ounces of all kinds of fish each week. Don't like fish? Get your omega-3s by eating one tablespoon of ground flaxseed on your cereal, one tablespoon of flaxseed oil or canola oil on a green salad, or a small handful of walnuts every day.

- **Vitamin B6** – Not getting enough vitamin B6 has been associated with depression in some studies. Good food sources of this vitamin are B6-fortified cereals, cooked dry beans, fish, liver, potatoes, poultry, tomato paste, prune juice and bananas. Up to the age of 50 years, men need 1.3 milligrams of vitamin B6 each day. Older men need a little more, 1.7 milligrams.
- **Vitamin B12** – Low blood levels of vitamin B12 have been associated with depression in some research studies. Men should get 2.4 micrograms of vitamin B12 daily. Men older than 50 years should get most of this vitamin from foods fortified with B12 or from a B12 supplement. Vitamin B12 is not found in plant foods naturally, but is present in B12-fortified foods such as cereals, and in animal products, including clams, oysters, crab, other fish, liver, beef, lamb and dairy products.

Arthritis – Problems with the joints

Men with arthritis find that one or more of their joints (such as in their hands, feet, knees or hips) is swollen, stiff, hard to move and painful. Arthritis causes more work disabilities than any other health condition except heart disease. Nearly 17 million men of all ages have doctor-diagnosed arthritis.

More than 100 types of arthritis exist. The most common are osteoarthritis and gout. Gout affects mostly men, and African American men are at greatest risk for developing gout.

Men who have had a sports injury (such as to their knee or hip), those ages 40 years and older, and men who are ten or more pounds overweight are at increased risk for osteoarthritis. Doing moderate physical activity, such as walking at least three times a week, can reduce the risk by almost half for knee osteoarthritis-related work disability. Losing 10 to 11 pounds of excess body weight also reduces the risk.

Arthritis is usually managed through moderate physical activity, healthy eating, weight reduction of about ten pounds, medication, surgery and other therapies. Diet and nutritional supplements can help relieve the symptoms of osteoarthritis, gout and rheumatoid arthritis.

How can a man manage his arthritis using healthy eating strategies?

- Balance the calories you eat with your physical activity. Take a load off your joints by losing some excess fat. Each pound of weight lost will result in a four pound reduction in the load exerted on your knee per step during your daily activities. Since you take thousands of steps each day, a small reduction in your body weight will add up to big benefits.
- Eat recommended amounts of vegetables, fruits and whole grains. As mentioned previously in this guide, most men need four to six cups of fruits and vegetables each day. Grab the most colorful ones more often. Get them fresh, canned, frozen or dried, with juice just occasionally. Each day, men should get three or more ounce-equivalents of whole grains (such as oats, popcorn, cereal and breads made with whole wheat, and brown or wild rice).

- Eat a variety of foods, including calcium-rich foods and beverages.
- Avoid any foods that interact with medications you take.
- Consume moderate amounts, if any, of sugar, salt, saturated fats and alcohol.
- Talk with your health care provider before taking dietary supplements.

What is the latest dietary advice for men who suffer from gout?

- Drink plenty of water and non-alcoholic beverages, about 8-12 cups a day.
- If you are overweight, lose ten pounds. Aim to lose weight gradually, not quickly, to avoid worsening symptoms of gout.
- Recent research indicates that men with gout should limit their intake of red meats and seafood. Also, drink low-fat or fat-free milk, or eat yogurt each day.
- Limit dietary sources of substances known as purines. Foods and beverages high in purines include beer and liquor, certain fish (anchovies, sardines in oil, herring and fish eggs), liver, kidneys, and meat extracts and gravies.

Are there specific foods that may reduce inflammation associated with rheumatoid arthritis?

- Yes. Citrus fruits, cruciferous vegetables, foods high in omega-3 fats, and the minerals zinc and selenium may help reduce rheumatoid arthritis inflammation. These nutrients should come from foods. More research is needed before dietary supplements of these nutrients can be recommended for men with arthritis.
- Citrus fruits include oranges, tangerines, grapefruits, lemons and limes.
- Cruciferous vegetables include arugula, bok choy, broccoli, Brussels sprouts,

cabbage, cauliflower, collards, kale, kohlrabi, mustard greens, radishes, rutabaga, turnips, turnip greens and watercress.

- Omega-3 fats are found in cold-water fish, flaxseed, canola oil and walnuts. Read more about these fats on page 5.
- Good dietary sources of zinc are oysters, zinc-fortified cereals, baked beans, beef, crab and lamb. Men should get 11 milligrams of zinc a day.
- Men need 55 micrograms of selenium per day. Good food sources of selenium include nuts, liver, fish, beef, pork, wheat, barley, rice and poultry.

Get Physical(s)

The three best ways for men to live long, strong and well and to prevent diseases from developing are to get regular health checkups, take preventive medication, if needed, and practice healthy behaviors.

Many male-related health problems including colon cancer, prostate cancer and cardiovascular disease can be detected early and prevented from becoming serious threats.

Talk with your health-care provider about other healthy life changes, such as:

- whether to use over-the-counter and prescription medications, herbals or nutritional supplements
- improving your eating choices
- increasing physical activity safely
- ways to stop using tobacco or excess alcohol
- getting adequate sleep
- dealing with stress
- avoiding too much sun exposure
- sexual health practices

What health checkups are recommended for men and how often should they be repeated?

Recommended checkups for men are presented on page 8. Check with your health care provider to determine which ones are appropriate for you. There may be other tests that you should get, such as scans to check your lungs and bone health, or checking your blood or urine for signs of diabetes, tuberculosis, and thyroid or kidney malfunction.

Summary

Men, as you press on toward your goals, consider making time to protect your own health. You will maximize your performance and reduce your chances of future health problems if you practice the life changes described in this guide. Making just a few of your habits healthier will give you benefits. Your family and friends depend on you. Live strong, long and well.

Resources

For more health information, visit the U.S. National Institutes of Health Web site at www.health.nih.gov or the K-State Department of Human Nutrition men's health Web site at www.oznet.ksu.edu/humannutrition/menshealth.htm.

For more information about healthy eating, contact your local K-State Research and Extension office.

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For Preventing Development of Testicular Cancer

Testicular self-exam Monthly _____

For Preventing Development of Skin Cancer

Self-exam checking for unusual moles and changes in skin condition
Monthly _____

For Maintaining General Health

Mouth self-exam Monthly _____

Dental check-up Twice a year _____

Eye exam Every 5 years _____

Hearing exam Every 10 years _____

Tetanus-diphtheria booster shot Every 10 years _____

Physical examination Every 3 years after age 30 _____

Every 2 years after age 40 _____

Every year after age 50 _____

Flu shot Every year after age 50 _____

Pneumonia shot Once, at age 65 _____

For Preventing Development of Cardiovascular Disease

Blood pressure measured Every year _____

Blood test for triglycerides and cholesterol Every 5 years after age 20 _____

For Preventing Development of Prostate Cancer

Blood test for prostate-specific antigen Every year after age 50 _____

For Preventing Development of Colon Cancer

Fecal occult blood test Every year after age 50 _____

Digital rectal exam Every year after age 50 _____

Flexible sigmoidoscopy Every 5 years after age 50 _____

Double contrast barium enema Every 5-10 years after age 50 _____

Colonoscopy Every 10 years after age 50 _____

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