

HEART HEALTH Primer

Although a family history of heart disease is one risk factor for heart attack and other cardiac problems, many aspects of heart health are within your control. Everything from what you eat to how you move can reduce your risk. **Heart healthy quick tips:**



- **EAT** a balanced, low-fat diet that includes plenty of fruits, vegetables and whole grains; eat omega-3-rich fish (such as salmon or mackerel) two times a week.
- **CUT** down on salt.
- **LIMIT** alcohol to no more than two drinks per day if you drink.
- **LOSE** excess weight.
- **EXERCISE** daily — for many rewards.
Note: See your health care provider before making major changes in your exercise habits.
- **QUIT** if you smoke or otherwise use tobacco.
- **KNOW** your numbers. High blood pressure and unhealthy cholesterol levels show no obvious symptoms or signs of change. Ask your health care provider how often you need these checked. Keep blood pressure below 120/80 mm Hg ("120 over 80").

The STRESS Factor

Research suggests that if you are quick to anger, you could be putting your heart at risk. Anger and other stressors can cause the release of the hormone **cortisol** and other stress-related chemicals into your bloodstream — powerful substances that can raise blood pressure and cholesterol, and increase other risk factors.

When you feel anger or irritation, take 10 deep breaths or walk it off. Give your body a chance to calm down. Your heart — and head — will thank you.

More Take-Home TIPS

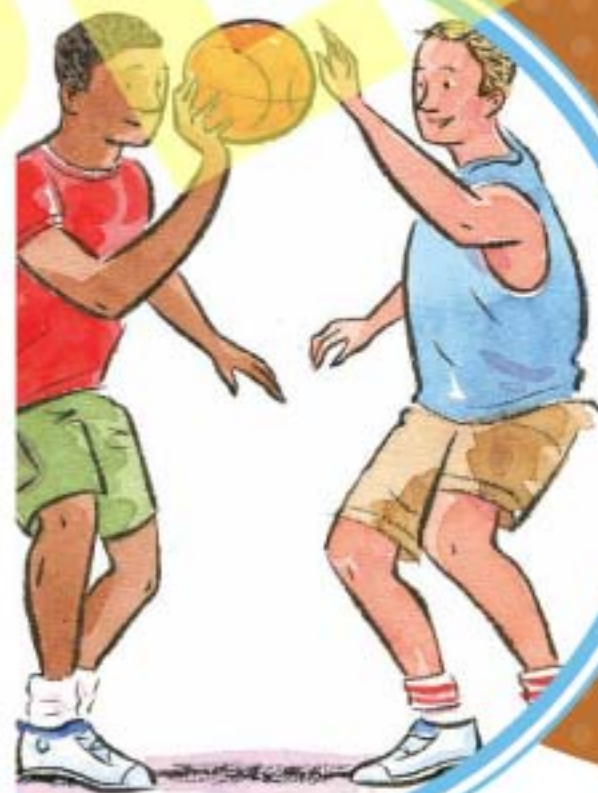
- **Hear, hear.** Limit your exposure to loud noises at work or play. Men suffer hearing loss at twice the rate of women. Be sure to get your hearing checked regularly if you're often exposed to loud noise.
- **Be a quitter.** Discuss smoking cessation options with your health care provider. Medications, nicotine replacement therapy and psychotherapy can help. Smoking is responsible for more than 80 percent of all lung cancers.

Men make half as many visits to their health care providers as women do. Are you pressing your luck? Rather than wait for a medical crisis, team up with a provider you feel comfortable talking to. Together, establish a routine screening schedule and work on ways to build the good health habits outlined in this brochure.

- **You're not alone.** ED is estimated to affect as many as 30 million American men. Don't be afraid or embarrassed to discuss it with your provider.
- **Colon health.** Experts recommend testing for colon cancer starting at age 50, or sooner depending on your personal health history.
- **Skin cancer sense.** Examine your skin routinely, and have a skin exam during regular checkups.
- **Lose those blues.** Everyone feels down now and then, but if you feel low or no longer enjoy pleasurable activities for more than two weeks, get help.
- **Take the lead.** Many aspects of your health are under your control. Eat right, exercise and get regular checkups. A strong, healthy body can mean a longer, more enjoyable life.

MEN'S HEALTH

A GUIDE FOR HEALTHY GUYS



THE GENDER GAP

Men die younger than women on average. They have higher mortality rates for all the leading causes of death. True, guys tend to take riskier jobs and indulge in more risk-taking behaviors. But experts believe the gender gap stems primarily from inattention: Men just don't take steps to protect their health as often as they should.



If you're a guy, what can you do now to safeguard your health and live longer? Here's a 5-point strategy:

1. **Eat a healthy diet** that is low in fat and high in fiber and other nutrients.
2. **Put down the remote** — stay physically active and exercise regularly.
3. **Recognize stress** and get it under control.
4. **Pay attention** to your body's symptoms and signals.
5. **Work with your health care provider** regularly, or check in now if anything concerns you.

Focus on These Health Issues

Heart disease. It's the No. 1 killer of men and women in the United States.

Prostate cancer and other cancers. Early detection and treatment is your best defense.

Couch potato-itis. Today's sedentary lifestyles have contributed to an epidemic of overweight and obesity, major risk factors in disease and poor health.

Mental health. Men are four times as likely to commit suicide as women, due in part to depression going undiagnosed.

Erectile dysfunction (ED). Although not life-threatening, ED can affect quality of life and can be a sign of more serious, undiagnosed conditions.

PROSTATE DISEASE: Knowledge Is Power

The prostate is a walnut-sized gland that surrounds the urethra, the tube that carries urine from your bladder. It causes problems for many men. **See your health care provider if you notice any of the following symptoms:**

- Urination stream is slow.
- Bladder does not feel completely empty after urination.
- You often wake during the night to urinate.
- You notice blood in your urine.

Some of these are signs of prostate enlargement, a non-life-threatening condition that many men experience as they age. But they could also be signs of a more serious problem, even prostate cancer, so don't delay having them checked by a medical professional.

Screening for prostate cancer may include a prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood test and routine DRE (digital rectal examination). Screening recommendations vary, so talk with your health care provider about what makes sense for you — especially if you're African-American or you have a father or brother who had prostate cancer at a young age. Both groups are at higher risk.



Think Safety First

More than 90 percent of workplace injuries happen to men. **Best prevention:** Know and follow all job safety rules, always wear personal protective gear as required or needed, and report any potential hazards to your supervisor.

ED: What You Should Know

From time to time, men of all ages can experience erectile dysfunction — the inability to have an erection or keep one long enough to finish sexual intercourse.

Most cases of ED — about 70 percent — result from certain conditions, such as diabetes, heavy alcohol use and hardening of the arteries. But many other factors can contribute to ED, such as common medications (including high blood pressure drugs, antihistamines and antidepressants), psychological factors and possibly smoking.

Because ED can signal a condition that needs treatment, it's important to discuss any concerns with your health care provider. ED may be treatable through lifestyle changes, such as cutting back on alcohol, or through medically supervised measures such as medication, surgery or psychotherapy. Your provider can help you decide what's right for you.

5 Minutes That Could Save Your Life

Although rare overall, testicular cancer is the most common cancer in men ages 15 to 34. Increasing your self-awareness can help you notice unusual changes. The American Cancer Society recommends a physician exam on the occasion of a periodic checkup for most men. **Heighten your self-awareness:**

- In a warm bath or shower, feel for any **lumps**.
- Notice whether one testicle seems **enlarged or tender**. **Note:** Their normal size may vary slightly from each other.
- If you find a lump, **don't panic**. Call your health care provider and have it checked. Testicular cancer that is caught early is often curable.

Staying FIT — and STRONG

Experts recommend you get at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity every day, such as brisk walking or bicycling. It's not as hard as it sounds to fit in fitness. **Try these ideas:**

Walk after lunch every day.

Run and play with your kids in the park.

Do handyman chores at a brisker pace.

Join an after-work sports league.

Tip: Hook up with an exercise buddy. It's easier to stick with a routine when someone else is depending on you.

