

Living Right®

Your Health and Wellness Awareness Bulletin

June 2015

Men's
health

Heart Disease: A top threat

A person may be unaware of the risk for heart problems because conditions such as high blood pressure may not have noticeable symptoms. However, heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women; 1 in every 4 male deaths is caused by heart disease, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Heart disease includes heart failure, irregular heartbeat, heart valve problems, and coronary artery disease. Coronary artery disease is the most common type of heart disease. Over time, it narrows and blocks vessels that supply blood to the heart and can lead to a heart attack.

Although a man's risk of heart disease increases greatly at age 45, there are lifestyle choices which can lower the risk:

Eat a healthy diet. Choose plenty of fruits, vegetables, and foods that are high in fiber. Eat foods that are low in saturated fat and sodium.

Exercise regularly. Aim for the recommended 150 minutes (2 hours and 30 minutes) of moderate intensity physical activity (i.e., brisk walking or biking) each week. Additionally, do muscle strengthening activities two or more days a week that work all major muscle groups.

Check your blood pressure. Have your blood pressure checked at least every two years. If you have high blood pressure, take your prescribed medicines and/or follow the doctor's orders.

Limit alcohol use and don't smoke. Too much alcohol can cause high blood pressure. Smoking damages the heart and blood vessels.

Manage stress. Controlling stress levels can prevent or reduce high blood pressure. Try deep breathing and meditation exercises to relax.

By the numbers

- **Fifty percent** of men who die suddenly of coronary heart disease have no previous symptoms. Even if you have no symptoms, you may still be at risk of heart disease.
- Between **70 percent** to **89 percent** of sudden cardiac events occur in men.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Don't put off that checkup

Men are more likely than women to smoke, drink alcohol, make unhealthy or risky choices, and put off regular checkups and medical care. In fact, men are 24 percent less likely than women to have visited the doctor in the past year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Even if you feel fine, you should see your doctor for regular checkups. A timely checkup can help catch diseases early. Some diseases don't have any symptoms at first, and the sooner a disease is detected, the easier it may be to treat.

At a checkup, doctors will test for conditions such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol (at least once every five years for men), depression, colorectal cancer (over age 50), and prostate cancer if you are showing symptoms. Visiting your doctor regularly is also a good way to stay up-to-date on your vaccinations.

In addition to checkups, it is also important for men to talk about their health. Find out about diseases that run in your family and share that information with your doctor.

You should not wait until you have symptoms of a disease before you visit a doctor. Start taking care of your health by eating healthy, implementing an exercise routine, limiting alcohol consumption, and not smoking to help prevent disease. Healthy habits can lower your blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, and weight; this reduces the risk of serious health problems such as heart disease and diabetes.

If you are just starting to make healthy lifestyle changes, it may be easier to take small steps. For example, try taking a walk instead of smoking a cigarette, substitute a salad for fries, drink water instead of soda or juice, and reduce sodium intake.

Attack of the kidney stone

If you have ever experienced excruciating pain from a kidney stone, you will most likely do whatever it takes to prevent getting another one. The pain can be so extreme that it leaves some people temporarily debilitated.

More than a million people visit health care providers each year with kidney stone problems, according to the National Kidney and Urologic Diseases Information Clearinghouse. Men are more likely than women to have these problems — 19 percent are likely to have a kidney stone in their lifetime, compared to 9 percent of women, according to the National Kidney Foundation.

A kidney stone is a hard mass made up of crystals that form in the kidney from highly concentrated substances normally found in urine. Most kidney stones will pass without medical treatment. However, sometimes a stone will not pass and will need to be removed surgically.

Whichever way the stone is evacuated from your body, your doctor will want to test what type of stone it is. This will help determine how you can help prevent future stones.

While anyone can be at risk of developing a kidney stone, hereditary factors and being overweight increase the probability. Additionally, if you have had one stone, you have a greater chance of having more. You can help prevent future stones when you:

- **Drink plenty of fluids.** Concentrated urine increases the chances of getting a kidney stone. Drinking two to three liters (64 to 96 ounces) of fluid daily is recommended. Water is ideal, but some citrus drinks can also help.
- **Listen to your doctor.** Your doctor may recommend eating more or less of certain foods and liquids.
- **Take your medicine.** Certain medicines can prevent some types of kidney stones.

Can baldness be cured?

For some men, hair loss can be devastating. Others are not bothered at all by a receding hairline and may even shave their heads.

Those who are troubled by hair loss may cover it with a new hairstyle, hat, or hairpiece. Some may try products to slow down hair loss.

Hair loss generally starts with a receding hairline and forms an “M” shape on the scalp. Over time, the hair becomes thinner and creates a U-shaped (or horseshoe) pattern around the head.

It is normal for a person to lose an average of 100 hairs on their scalp daily, and in most people the hairs grow back. However, family history, hormones, and medical conditions can cause hair loss for both men and women. Stress and diet can also cause hair loss.

There are occasions when hair loss could signify other health conditions. Call your doctor if you are losing your hair in an atypical pattern, lose significant amounts at a time (often in clumps), you are in your teens or twenties, your hair breaks, or you have redness, scaling, or pain on your scalp.

If you are not ready for the bald look, applying solutions to the scalp or taking a pill prescribed by your doctor are both known to slow hair loss and may bring new hair growth.

Another route is hair transplants. This procedure removes hair from areas on the body where hair is still growing and places it in the balding areas. The process can require multiple sessions, however, and can be expensive.

Take care to prevent injuries

Unintentional injuries are the third leading cause of death for men, and the sixth leading cause for women, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Accidental death or injury can happen anywhere — at home, work, or on the road. Severe injuries or death often happen from car accidents, drug overdose, falls, and fires. At work, men incur over 90 percent of the fatal occupational injuries.

While not all accidents can be avoided, limit the risk of accidental injury or death with following simple steps:

- Do not drive when you are tired;
- Never drive when under the influence or ride with someone who is;
- Wear your seatbelt and obey the speed limit;
- Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in your home;
- Wear safety gear such as helmets when participating in sports;
- Use the handrail when walking up and down the stairs;
- Use caution with ladders, power equipment, and chemicals; and
- Follow workplace safety guidelines and OSHA standards.




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