

Men's Health



You're not invincible!

If you take better care of your car or favourite gadget than your body, you aren't alone. According to the 'Men's Health Network', a lack of awareness, health education, and unhealthy work and personal lifestyles have caused a steady deterioration of the well-being of men.

In England and Wales men have a higher mortality rate than women and are more likely to die prematurely. Research shows that 19% of all male deaths were aged under 65, in comparison to 12% in women.

Research also suggests that only half as many men visit their GP in comparison to women, and the main reason identified was not wanting to take time off work. When men do visit the doctors, they are also less likely to report on the symptoms of disease or illness', with 70% of men saying that their friends can come to them for support, but only 43% feeling they can go to their friends.

Prostate Cancer

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men in the UK. It usually develops slowly, so there may be no signs for many years. But what are the main symptoms to look out for:

- An increased need to pee
- Straining while you pee
- A feeling that your bladder has not fully emptied

These symptoms should not be ignored, but they do not necessarily mean you have prostate cancer. It's more likely they're caused by something else, such as prostate enlargement. Which is why visiting your GP if these symptoms occur is very important.

The causes of prostate cancer are largely unknown. But certain factors can increase your risk of developing the condition:

- Age (older than 50)
- African-Caribbean or African Descent
- Men whose father or brother have been affected
- Obesity

Tests for prostate cancer

There's no single test for prostate cancer. All the tests used to help diagnose the condition have benefits and risks that your doctor should discuss with you. The most commonly used tests for prostate cancer are:

- Blood tests
- A physical examination of your prostate (known as a digital rectal examination, or DRE)
- An MRI scan
- A biopsy

The blood test, called a prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test, measures the level of PSA and may help detect early prostate cancer. Men over 50 can ask for a PSA test from a GP. Your PSA level however can be raised by other, non-cancerous conditions. Raised PSA levels also cannot tell a doctor whether a man has life-threatening prostate cancer or not. If you have a raised PSA level, you may be offered an MRI scan of the prostate to help doctors decide if you need further tests and treatment.

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Testicular Cancer

What should your testicles feel like?

Most men's testicles are about the same size, but it's common for one to be slightly bigger than the other. It's also common for one testicle to hang lower than the other. The testicles should feel smooth, without any lumps or bumps, and firm but not hard. You may feel a soft tube at the back of each testicle, which is called the epididymis.

The infographic is contained within a rounded rectangular border and is organized into a 3x3 grid of circular icons. Each icon is accompanied by a text label. The icons include: a calendar, a hand being showered, a hand with soap, a diagram of testicles with numbered arrows, a hand rolling a testicle, a diagram of spermatic cords, a diagram of testicles with target markers, a diagram of testicles with shaded areas, and a diagram of a testicle with a target marker.

S	M	T	W	T
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	
29	30	31		

CHECK YOUR TESTICLES AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH

PERFORM THE TEST IN THE SHOWER

SOAP YOURSELF UP

CHECK ONE TESTICLE AT THE TIME

GENTLY ROLL IT BETWEEN THE FINGERS

FEEL UP THE SPERMATIC CORDS ON THE BACK SIDE OF TESTICLES

LOOK FOR HARD LUMPS, SMOOTH OR ROUNDED BUMPS ...

...CHANGES IN SIZE, SHAPE OR CONSISTENCY...

...OR ANY PAINFUL AREAS

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What are the signs of testicular cancer?

The early signs of testicular cancer are easy to spot. Look out for one or more of the following:

- A hard lump on the front or side of a testicle
- Swelling or enlargement of a testicle
- An increase in firmness of a testicle
- Pain or discomfort in a testicle or in the scrotum (the sac that holds the testicles)
- An unusual difference between one testicle and the other

Mental Health and Suicide

In England, around 1 in 8 men have a common mental health condition, but unfortunately due to the stigma surrounding the topic, many aren't or are reluctant to seek the support they need or open up to loved ones about what they are experiencing. This reflects in the statistics surrounding suicide, with 75% of those who died by suicide in Great Britain being male.

If you are concerned for someone you know, you don't need to be an expert, just being there, listening and giving your time to someone can make all the difference. For those struggling, reaching out is crucial. Utilise those around you, talk to your GP or contact the various services listed below for support, guidance and advice:

- **CALM** is a leading movement against suicide and have various forms of contact available to anyone who is feeling down or hit a crisis point. Call their free, confidential helpline on 0800 585858 or webchat found at www.thecalmzone.net/help/get-help/ (open 17:00 – midnight, 365 days a year).

- **Samaritans:** whatever you're going through, they're there to face it with you. Call their free, confidential helpline on 116 123 (open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year), or send them an email on jo@samaritans.org (response time – 24 hours).
- **The Men's Health Forum:** this is a charity organisation providing vital men's health information on many different areas and topics. Visit their website at www.menshealthforum.org.uk/ to access all they have to offer.

The five ways to well-being

The five ways to well-being are five areas of your life that allow you to feel good and to function well.

1. Connect – speak to others and engage with friends and family
2. Be active – 30 minutes of exercise per day, including a brisk walk
3. Learn – learn a new skill or perhaps read a new book
4. Give – Help those in need and ask if people need help
5. Take notice – Look out the window. What's new on your commute or daily walk?

These five evidence backed methods have been proven to increase our health and well-being when incorporated into our everyday life.

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Becoming a Dad

Apart from the obvious, there are also a number of lifestyle changes that can improve your chances of becoming a dad:

- **Smoking** – Smoking can reduce fertility as well as significantly increasing a new-born baby's chances of respiratory when smoking around them.
- **Alcohol** – Drinking alcohol excessively can affect the quality of sperm.
- **Recreational drugs** – Some recreational drugs are known to damage sperm quality and reduce male fertility. These include but are not limited to cannabis, cocaine, and anabolic steroids.
- **Diet, weight, and exercise** – Eating a healthy, balanced diet and maintaining a healthy weight is essential for keeping your sperm in good condition.
- **Stress** – Stress can affect your relationship and may also limit sperm production.
- **Sperm temperature** – Your testicles are outside your body because, to produce the best quality sperm, they need to be kept cooler than the rest of you (slightly below body temperature). If your job involves working in a hot environment, take regular breaks outside. If you sit still for long periods, get up and move around regularly.

Nutrition and Exercise

65% of men in England are overweight or obese and one third of men have been shown to not meet the recommended physical activity guidelines (150 mins of moderate activity or 75 mins of intense activity per week).

Being overweight can lead to a number of life-threatening conditions including coronary heart disease, diabetes, cancer and strokes. Research has shown a causal connection between regular exercise and a lowered cancer risk and increased heart health (National Cancer Institute). This could be due to many reasons, including reduced levels of insulin in the blood, reduced inflammation, and obesity prevention.

A healthy balanced diet can help to maintain a healthy weight and reduce your risk of cancer. The 'Eatwell Guide' (page 5) can be used to make sure we are getting the right proportion of each food group into our diet.

MyFitnessPal is a really useful app for tracking calorie consumption or, try joining a local weight loss group to keep you motivated, social and allow yourself to work within a team to achieve your goals.

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Eatwell Guide

Use the Eatwell Guide to help you get a balance of healthier and more sustainable food. It shows how much of what you eat overall should come from each food group.

Check the label on packaged foods

Each serving (150g) contains

Energy 100kcal 250kcal	Fat 3.0g LOW	Saturated 1.3g LOW	Sugars 34g HIGH	Salt 0.9g MED
13%	4%	7%	38%	15%

of an adult's reference intake
Typical values (as sold) per 100g: 697kJ/167kcal

Choose foods lower in fat, salt and sugars

6-8 a day

Water, lower fat milk, sugar-free drinks including tea and coffee all count.

Limit fruit juice and/or smoothies to a total of 150ml a day.

Choose wholegrain or higher fibre versions with less added fat, salt and sugar

Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates

Choose lower fat and lower sugar options

Oil & spreads

Choose unsaturated oils and use in small amounts

Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins

Eat more beans and pulses, 2 portions of sustainably sourced fish per week, one of which is oily. Eat less red and processed meat

Fruit and vegetables

Eat at least 15 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables every day

Eat less often and in small amounts

Sauce, Crisps, Cakes, Biscuits, Chocolate

Per day 2000kcal 2500kcal = ALL FOOD + ALL DRINKS

Source: Public Health England in association with the Welsh Government, Food Standards Scotland and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland © Crown copyright 2016

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Smoking and Alcohol

Smoking is the leading preventable cause of cancer in the UK and causes 7 in 10 lung cancer cases. It's never too late to quit and there is so much support available. You can talk to your GP, pharmacist or visit the NHS smoke free website.

After 8 hours of not smoking, carbon monoxide and nicotine levels in the body reduce by 50% and are eliminated after 24 hours. Two weeks without smoking increases circulation and lung function, and after one year smoke free your risk of a heart attack falls by half.

Alcohol can cause 7 different types of cancer and research shows that men are more likely than women to drink over the recommended drinking the limit.

The weekly limit is currently no more than 14 units per week, spread over three days or more. This is around 5 pints of beer or 1.5 bottles of wine.

Tips to reduce your alcohol intake:

- Keep a record – use the NHS drinks tracker
- Alternate between alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks
- Make soft drinks more interesting
- Set yourself several drink free days
- Buddy up with a friend or family member – motivate each other!

Resources:

- www.menshealthnetwork.org/goals
- www.healthline.com/health/top-10-health-risks-for-men
- www.blueribbonfoundation.org.uk
- www.orchid-cancer.org.uk/
- www.prostatecanceruk.org/
- www.menshealthforum.org.uk
- <https://uk.movember.com/>
- <https://menssheds.org.uk/>
- www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/mens-health/how-can-i-improve-my-chances-of-becoming-a-dad/
- www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/mens-health/what-should-my-testicles-look-and-feel-like/
- www.nhs.uk/conditions/prostate-cancer/
- www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/nhs-stop-smoking-services-help-you-quit/
- www.nhs.uk/servicesearch/Alcohol-addiction/LocationSearch/1805