

A high-angle, top-down photograph of a man running up a set of concrete stairs. He is wearing a bright red t-shirt, a matching red baseball cap, black athletic pants with a red stripe down the side, and red sneakers. He is captured in mid-stride, leaning forward with his arms pumping. The scene is brightly lit, casting a sharp shadow of the runner onto the stairs. The background shows the repetitive pattern of the concrete steps.

# Men's Health GUIDE



# Cardiovascular Health

The American Heart Association reports that cardiovascular disease is the No. 1 cause of death among American men. Screenings for this disease are very important, as you can still lead a healthy life by changing behaviors that impact this condition.

Heart disease is mostly preventable in younger men. You can boost your heart health by practicing regular exercise, eating healthy and drinking alcohol responsibly.

## REGULAR SCREENINGS

The AHA recommends you beginning regular cardiovascular screenings as early as age 20. There are several factors your doctor will analyze to determine your risk factors. Learn what they're looking for and the recommended age to begin certain screenings.

- **Blood pressure:** It is unlikely you will experience noticeable symptoms due to high blood pressure. This is why early screenings are crucial. An initial screening should be administered at age 20 and regularly checked based on your doctor's recommendation.

- **Cholesterol:** At the age of 20 and every four to six years after that, you should be checked for cholesterol discrepancies. Cholesterol levels that are too high or too low can be extremely dangerous to your heart.

- **Glucose levels:** Diabetes can wreak havoc on heart health. Beginning at age 45, levels should be checked at least every three years.

## UNCHANGABLE RISKS

While there are many pro-



active measures you can practice to lower your risk of cardiovascular disease, there are some factors you are unable to change.

Aging greatly raises the risk of developing heart disease. About 80 percent of people who die from coronary heart disease are age 65 or older.

Another risk you cannot alter is gender. Men have a greater risk of experiencing a heart attack and are more likely to experience them earlier in life.

Heart disease also can be genetic. Determine your family history of heart issues to learn more about your risks.

## FACTORS YOU CAN CHANGE

**Quit smoking.** This is imperative. The AHA states that smokers are up to four times more likely to develop heart disease than nonsmokers.

**Stay in shape.** Physical activity such as jogging or

weight lifting strengthens heart muscles and can keep your body's fat levels low. Excess body fat, especially at the waist, plays a large role in heart disease.

**Eat healthy.** Avoid sugary and fatty foods. A healthy diet is a great defense against cardiovascular disease.

# Mental Health Concerns

While both men and woman are subject to mental health conditions, experts believe men are less likely to seek help. Suicide in America has been on a steady rise since 2000 and is the seventh leading cause of death for men.

Men who experience depression or another mental health disorder will show several different warning signs, including aggressive behavior, substance abuse, changes in appetite or trouble sleeping. If you find yourself experiencing these symptoms, it is time to seek help.

## EXPRESSING YOUR FEELINGS

If you are overcome with feelings of depression, it may seem easier to repress the feelings and attempt to deal with the situation on your own.

The experts at the National Institute of Mental Health say this leads many men down the dark road of abusing drugs or alcohol to cope with emotional issues. This behavior can lead to more severe conditions, including health problems, financial stress and ultimately suicide.

You can find relief by talking to your loved ones and doctor. Your doctor will be able to prescribe you important medication to help curb feelings of depression. He also might recommend a qualified therapist in your area.

Therapy sessions will give you the chance to be completely honest about your feelings in a non-judgmental setting. Through these sessions, your therapist can usually



determine the cause of depression and create a plan to help you cope.

## SEVERE ANXIETY

Another common mental health disorder men experience is severe anxiety. Feeling anxious when facing high-stress situations is an issue everyone faces. However,

when anxiety occurs without warning and does not fade, it can create distractions that interfere with daily activities.

Severe cases of anxiety often cause panic attacks. The NIH defines a panic attack as a feeling of intense fear that can include accelerated heart rate, trembling, shortness of breath and a feeling of impending

doom.

This serious disorder can be treated through medicine, therapy and family support.

## STRESS MANAGEMENT

Stress is different for everyone but is often a contributor in the development of mental health disorders. The next time you feel like the weight

of the world is on your shoulders, practice these methods recommended by the National Alliance on Mental Illness:

- Exercise daily;
- Take time for yourself;
- Practice good time management skills; and
- Express your feelings with loved ones.



# Colon Health

About one in 21 men will develop colon cancer during their lifetime. As with other cancers, early screening is just as important as practicing a healthy lifestyle.

The American Cancer Society estimates that colorectal cancer will take the lives of 50,260 Americans in 2017. As the third-leading cause of cancer-related death in men, it is crucial to understand the importance of early detection and what you can do to prevent colorectal cancer.

## SCREENINGS

Per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, men who are at an average risk of colon cancer should begin screenings at the age of 50. A higher risk due to family history may require early screenings.

A colonoscopy is performed to inspect your rectum and entire colon for signs of cancer.

Typically, a doctor will be looking for polyps, which are small growths that commonly turn cancerous. These polyps can be easily eliminated or pulled for a biopsy during the procedure.

For your doctor to have a clear view, you will be required to completely empty your



colon before your appointment. This means you must avoid solid foods for at least 24 hours. Ask your doctor about acceptable consumables.

During the procedure, your doctor will insert a colonoscope into your rectum. This instrument contains a light and a video camera, giving your doctor a clear visual of your colon's condition.

Typically, the procedure only lasts around 30 minutes and a full recovery occurs just a few hours afterwards.

## SYMPTOMS OF COLON CANCER

Sometimes, the only way to spot colon cancer is through a colonoscopy, but the following symptoms require immediate attention:

- Blood in stool or blood stains in underwear;
- Constant abdomen pain; and
- Unexplained weight loss.

## HEALTHY HABITS

Keeping your colon healthy requires staying in overall good health. Having regular bowel movements without experiencing pain is a good indicator

that everything is working normally.

Constant diarrhea or any signs of bleeding mean you should take proactive measures to enhance your colon's health.

Limit your levels of caffeine and alcohol to boost health. Plenty of water and exercise are other great weapons. Men also are recommended to ingest at least 32 grams of fiber per day.



# Importance of Exercise

Regular exercise can boost confidence, improve health and lead to substantial stress reduction. It is easy to avoid exercise with so many other responsibilities during your day, but it is important to fit it in.

## GETTING STARTED

Introducing an exercise program into a normally sedentary lifestyle can cause inconvenience as it will take a bit of time for your body to feel comfortable. It is important to start slowly and not over-do it at the beginning.

When planning your new exercise routine, set aside five minutes a day, five days a week. Then add an extra five minutes to your regimen each week for four weeks. Your body should be able to easily adjust using these five-minute intervals. Following this meth-

od will transition into a 20-minute exercise system by week four.

By week five, you should begin exercising an additional 10 minutes per day each week. Dedicating yourself to this system will get you up to a full hour in only two months.

Adding these small intervals over time also will give you a good idea of how to fit exercise into your schedule. Even if you cannot complete a full hour at one time, break it up throughout the day. Remember to perform your routine three to five times a week.

## EXERCISE FOR HEART HEALTH

Physical activity is necessary to prevent heart disease and stroke. The American Heart Association recommends a few different methods to boost your overall cardiovascular health.

- A total of 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity each week. The CDC defines moderate intensity as working hard enough to be able to comfortably talk but breathing too hard to sing a song. Exercises can include walking fast, bike riding or

water aerobics.

- Another way to obtain premium heart health is performing vigorous aerobic activity for 75 minutes per week. Vigorous intensity means you will be breathing too hard to say more than a few words without taking a breath. Exercises include playing tennis, running or jogging and playing basketball.

- By performing 40 minutes of moderate- to vigorous aerobic activity just three or four times a week, you can greatly improve high blood pressure and cholesterol levels.



# Healthy Prostate

**P**rostate cancer is a major problem for American men. The American Cancer Society reports more than 190,000 new cases in the United States each year.

Staying on top of your prostate health is key, as the disease generally develops so slowly that is commonly caught before it can spread to other parts of your body. An initial screening is recommended at the age of 50 and annually after that. A family history or other factors that increase your risk may require an earlier checkup.

## TYPES OF SCREENING

Doctors can generally perform two different types of screening to diagnose prostate cancer.

The first requires a physical rectum exam in which your physician will identify any abnormalities such as lumps, hard spots or any signs of growth. A healthy prostate is about the size of a walnut.

The less intrusive way of testing is called a prostate specific antigen (PSA) test. A simple blood test that checks levels of PSA in blood. Men with prostate issues typically have higher levels.



## TREATMENT

Once prostate cancer has been diagnosed, it is time to begin discussing treatment with your doctor. According to the American Cancer Society, there are several different ways to attack prostate cancer:

- Surgery;
- Chemotherapy and radiation;
- Active surveillance; and

- Vaccine treatment.

The most effective treatment will depend on the stage of cancer and a person's age. If you find yourself in this situation, be sure to take your time when deciding which option is best for you. Discuss with your doctor any possible side effects and the likelihood of cure for each treatment offered.

## HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

While scientists haven't pinpointed a direct cause of prostate cancer, they recommend an overall healthy lifestyle to lower the risks of cancer in general.

You should consume plenty of super foods that contain cancer-fighting antioxidants. These can be found in many vegetables including broccoli,

kale and Brussels sprouts.

Consuming lycopene also has shown positive benefits in preventing prostate cancer. Food sources are easily spotted because lycopene is the pigment that gives red fruits and vegetables their colors. It works by destroying free radicals in your body that attempt to attach to your cells and damage your immune system.

# Responsible Alcohol Use

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, men are twice as likely as women to participate in binge drinking.

Becoming highly intoxicated can put you in danger due to irresponsible decision-making and can have a negative impact on your health.

The American Heart Association states that no more than two alcoholic drinks should be consumed daily for men. Too much alcohol in your diet increases your chances of high blood pressure, obesity, cancer and accidental injuries.

## BENEFITS OF RESPONSIBLE DRINKING

By sticking to alcohol restrictions, you can reduce the risk of developing heart disease. Studies have even shown that responsible alcohol use might lower your risk of diabetes or strokes.

Research shows that moderate alcohol consumption could be most important to those who have an existing risk of heart disease. This works due to resveratrol, a substance found in alcohol that prevents platelets in blood from sticking together. Reducing these buildups lowers the chance of a heart



attack or stroke.

## HEAVY ALCOHOL ABUSE RISKS

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism reports that anything over 14 drinks per week is considered heavy- or at-risk drinking for men under 65. Those over 65 years old should avoid more than seven drinks per week.

There are many health risks that come with alcohol abuse.

Mouth, throat and esophagus cancers have all been linked to alcohol abuse.

It also can impact your mental health, leading to depression, alcohol dependence and even suicide. The CDC says men are more likely than women to have been drinking prior to committing suicide.

## FUNCTIONING ALCOHOLIC

Many people struggling

with alcohol issues aren't like the ones you see on television. They are not jobless, homeless or helpless people. "Functioning" alcoholics can have successful careers and beautiful homes and be upstanding members of society. However, the damage alcohol abuse can cause to a body and mind can make all the success short-lived.

The risk factors depend on individual's level of abuse and

how his body reacts to alcohol. Those with a family history of abuse may become dependent sooner than someone who does not.

If you feel that alcohol may be overtaking your life or you realize your drinking habits put you at risk, you should seek help.

Find a local counselor in your area and be honest when discussing your consumption levels.



# Testosterone Levels

**T**estosterone is crucial to men's health. It assists in keeping bones strong and impacts a man's physical appearance. Levels begin lowering once men enter their 30s and 40s. Some situations might prematurely lower testosterone levels.

You might experience low testosterone levels due to medicinal side effects, testicle injuries, being obese or even problems with glands in your brain that control production. If you notice depression, insomnia or an unexplained decrease in muscle mass, you should express concerns to your doctor that you might be facing low levels of testosterone.

## REGULAR LEVELS AND HEALTH BENEFITS

Testosterone is a hormone that develops in the testicles and is necessary to stimulate male development. Healthy levels are regulated by the hypothalamus and pituitary glands.

Some of the benefits men see from healthy testosterone levels are efficient production of red blood cells and sperm. It also regulates bone mass, fat distribution and strength.

## HIGH OR LOW LEVELS

• **Too much:** Having elevated levels of testosterone can lead to acne on the back and shoulders. Some also experience testicle shrinkage, reduced fertility or even hair loss. The most common way men are exposed to above normal levels is by using anabolic steroids. These substances are extremely harmful to your heart and liver.



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• **Too little:** Low levels can lead to depression, loss of muscle and an increase in body fat. Because of testosterone's ability to strengthen bones, it also can put an individual at risk of osteoporosis.

## TREATMENT

Ask your doctor about treatment options if you feel you are suffering from low testosterone levels. It can be discovered through a simple blood test.

Hormone therapy is one

effective treatment. It involves man-made testosterone being injected or implanted into your body to make up for your body's inability to produce adequate levels of testosterone.

There are risks to consider.

Hormone therapy can increase the risk of heart attack or stroke and be dangerous for men with a history of prostate cancer. Be sure to consult with your physician as you consider this type of treatment.