



STRENGTHEN YOUR HEART

If a man's body had an engine, it would be the heart. And everyone knows an engine won't operate if it's neglected. That's why it's essential that men do what it takes to keep their hearts running smoothly. Following are five ways you can do that.

See your doctor. Your health provider can test your heart health and your risk factors by checking your blood pressure, cholesterol and sugar levels and then recommend measures for addressing any red flags.

Move. Like any muscle, the heart gets stronger with exercise. One study found that men who exercise regularly had a 25% lower likelihood of death.

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Quit smoking. Yes, easier said than done, but absolutely worth it. If you smoke, quitting is probably the best thing you can do for your heart.

Eat better. That doesn't just mean eliminating bad foods – although you should – but also seeking out heart-healthy foods, including green veggies, fruits and low-fat proteins.

Reduce stress. Biochemically, your body has 1,400 responses to stress, including high blood pressure and faster heart rates. While it's impossible to eliminate stress completely, cut out stressors you can control and find constructive ways to deal with the rest. Your heart will thank you.

Smart Facts

25%

of all men's deaths are attributed to heart disease.

50%

of men who die suddenly of coronary heart disease had no previous symptoms.

80%

of cardiovascular disease is preventable.



MEN'S TOP HEALTH CONCERNS

It's common knowledge that women outnumber men in the U.S. population. What is less known is that more males are born each year than females. Why does this balance shift? Demetrius Porche, the registered nurse who serves as editor in chief of the *American Journal of Men's Health*, puts it pretty simply: "Men put their health last," he said.

The thing is, we know what issues need to be addressed to change this scenario. Following are some of the top health concerns for men and what they can do to live healthier – and longer—lives.

Heart disease. Improved cardiovascular health can make a huge difference in men's longevity. See page one for some tips on strengthening your heart.

Cancer. We tend to think of cancer as a rogue disease that is more about bad luck than poor health habits. But many cancers can be prevented through lifestyle choices such as stopping smoking and reducing alcohol consumption and exposure to the sun's rays. Even those that can't be prevented can often be overcome with early detection, so get those screenings. Most concerning for men: prostate cancer, lung cancer and colorectal cancer.

Depression/suicide. Depression isn't just about sadness; it's a medical condition that too often leads to death by suicide, which is now the 10th leading cause of death in the U.S. If you experience feelings of depression, address them with professional care. Your life might depend on it.

Diabetes. Diabetes can do a lot of damage, leading to heart attacks, strokes, blindness, kidney failure and more. Fortunately, there's a lot that can be done to address it, from simple diet changes to exercise to medication. First, you have to know you have it. Get your blood sugar tested annually.

Flu. The flu can seem like just an annual annoyance, but to men who are immunocompromised, have respiratory problems or are generally unhealthy, it can be serious enough to lead to death. Annual vaccines can be life-savers, as can seeing your doctor when you do get the flu.

Accidents and injuries. Accidents and injuries are the third-leading cause of death for men. The challenge is that reducing accidents and injuries requires doing two things that men tend not to do: Be careful and take injuries seriously enough to get care.



"Men put their health last."

DECODING BENEFITS ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Benefits documents sometimes seem to be nothing but a bunch of bewildering acronyms strung together. But the meanings behind those letters should be anything but bewildering because they represent key aspects of your employee benefits. Following is a list of the most common acronyms and abbreviations and the meanings behind them.

COBRA. "Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act" allows you to continue your health insurance after you leave a job.

EAP. "Employee Assistance Program" is a program that helps workers address work-life challenges, get professional services and more.

EOB. "Explanation of Benefit" is a document you receive from your health benefits provider after a covered healthcare service.

FMLA. "Family Medical Leave Act" protects you from losing your job if you take time off for a serious illness or to care for a family member or newborn.

FSA. "Flexible Spending Account" is a pre-tax account used to pay for expenses such as healthcare, parking, education and childcare.

HSA. "Health Savings Account" is an account that sets aside pre-tax dollars for health needs.

HRA. "Health Reimbursement Account" is a savings account your employer might offer to help manage certain medical expenses.

HDHP. "High-Deductible Health Plan" is a health plan with low premiums and high deductibles.

PPO. "Preferred Provider Organization" is a group of physicians, hospitals and other providers that contract with an insurer to provide reduced-cost services.

QLE. "Qualifying Life Event" is a life event (including marriage, divorce or birth of a child) that qualifies you to make changes to benefits coverage.

PCP. "Primary Care Provider" is your doctor, nurse practitioner, physical therapist, etc.

HIPPA. "Health Insurance Portability Accountability Act" is the rule that protects your personal medical information.

LTD. "Long-Term Disability" is a type of insurance that provides a percentage of your income in the event you are unable to work for a long period of time.

STD. "Short-Term Disability" is a type of insurance that provides a percentage of your income in the event you can't work for a defined amount of time.



Heart Month

The importance of heart month is made clear in one simple fact: Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in America. But the opportunity to change that is also clear: An estimated 80% of cardiovascular disease is preventable. The keys? Knowledge and awareness. Know what you can do to improve your heart health and be aware of what your body might be telling you. Learn more [here](#).

HARVEST OF THE MONTH: CABBAGE

Green vegetables are typically served with the promise that they're good for you. Cabbage thoroughly delivers on that promise. An antioxidant that's high in Vitamins K and C and packed with fiber, cabbage has been lauded as a cancer fighter, skin refresher, inflammation reducer, digestive aid and heart-health powerhouse. Some people even say it can reduce headaches when put in a warm compress and applied to the forehead, and others consider it to be a great cure for a hangover (which might have something to do with its popularity as a New Year's Day dish).

With all of this going for it, it's no wonder that cabbage has stood the test of time, and is considered by some to be one of the oldest cultivated food sources on the planet. This might have something to do with the fact that it's incredibly hardy, has always been relatively inexpensive and is widely grown. Some believe it was one of the reasons why Europeans survived the Great Potato Famine in the mid-1800s: When a blight wiped out potato crops, many hungry families subsisted on cabbage.



Remember: Cabbage is a cold-weather crop, so you'll find the freshest specimens in the market between November and April. When choosing cabbage heads, look for ones that are not firm but do feel heavy for their size and that have healthy-looking leaves. You can store whole heads of cabbage in a plastic bag in the crisper of your refrigerator for about a month.



Recipe: Healing Cabbage Soup

Ingredients: 8 Servings

3 tablespoons olive oil
½ onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, chopped
2 quarts water
4 teaspoons chicken bouillon granules
1 teaspoon salt, or to taste
½ teaspoon black pepper, or to taste
½ head cabbage, cored and coarsely chopped
1 (14.5 oz.) can Italian-style stewed tomatoes, drained and diced

Directions:

Heat olive oil in a large stockpot over medium heat. Stir in onion and garlic; cook until onion is transparent, about 5 minutes. Stir in water, bouillon, salt and pepper. Bring to a boil, then stir in cabbage. Simmer until cabbage wilts, about 10 minutes. Stir in tomatoes. Return to a boil, then simmer 15 to 30 minutes, stirring often.

Nutrition Information:

CALORIES: 82; SUGARS: 6G; FAT: 5G; CARBOHYDRATES: 9G; PROTEIN: 2G; FIBER: 2G; CALCIUM: 57MG; SODIUM: 463MG; IRON: 1MG; POTASSIUM: 143MG

Sources: Accessed January 6, 2023

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