

Men's health

It's not always easy for men to ask for help and therefore they often don't, in fact men are more likely to look after their car better than themselves.



Reducing the risk of cancer

You can't always avoid some health risks but there are some that you can at least influence.



Drinking alcohol

Alcohol is high in calories and is related to some cancers. Intake should be limited to the recommended units for men, which is the same as women, at 14 units per week. Also trying not drink every night or binge drink and when on a night out try switching to soft drinks or non- alcoholic drinks as the night progresses. And even having a few glasses of water in between to help prevent dehydration. Know your units of alcohol – [Check your drinking | Alcohol Change UK](#)



Being overweight

Being overweight or obese is linked to an overall risk of cancer. Eat healthy fuel foods, to keep energy levels up without piling on the weight, such as vegetables, fruits, pulses and wholegrain bread and brown rice. These are examples of the types of food that have more nutrients and are higher in fibre which can help protect you from cancer. They also make you feel full, so you are less hungry.

[The Eatwell Guide – NHS](#)

According to Cancer Research UK, being overweight and obese is the second biggest preventable cause of cancer in the UK with 1-in 20 cases caused by excess weight. Being overweight does not mean you are going to get cancer, but you are increasing your risk more than if you are a healthy weight.



Exercise

We all know that exercise is good for us both physically and mentally but there is a significant link, conducted by researchers at Bristol through Cancer Research UK, which has identified that physical activity could significantly reduce the risk of bowel cancer. They have also discovered data showing that exercise can be beneficial for people recovering from cancer too. Sport is a great way of keeping fit but most of us overestimate what we need to do to say healthy. If you can aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate activity (brisk walk) a day this will help reduce your risk of heart disease and some cancers.



Smoking

Smoking is the most preventable cause of cancer in the world. It accounts for more than 1 in 4 UK cancer deaths. The advice is simple – please stop smoking and reduce your risk.



Sun exposure

Over exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light from the sun or sun beds is the main cause of skin cancer. We all need sun for healthy bones, but most people can make enough vitamin D without allowing ourselves to get burnt.

Here are some common myths relating to some cancers:

- Wearing tight underpants causes Testicular cancer... **False.**
- Men don't get breast cancer... **False, unfortunately they do, but it is less common.**
- Mobile phones cause brain tumors... **Not proven but the bills can certainly give you a headache.**
- Living under powerlines cause cancer... **again not proven as no evidence.**
- Regularly eating burnt meat off the BBQ won't increase your risk of cancer... **False there is evidence that it can!**



Detecting cancer early – remember normal is different for everyone

Things to consider:

- A change in bowel/bladder habit
- New or changing lumps and bumps
- New or changing moles
- Shortness of breath, a persistent cough or wheezing.
- Indigestion and/or difficulty swallowing
- A sore or bruise that won't heal
- Unexplained weight loss
- Significant family history.

Get to know your body, checking for lumps and bumps and changes in skin is important but so is being mindful of any changes to your bodily functions. Please remember anything new, different, and persistent should be investigated by a GP as a matter of urgency. Please don't feel embarrassed and put off seeing a GP, trust me it's nothing a GP hasn't seen before!

Mental health and men

Societal expectations and traditional gender roles play a role in why men are less likely to discuss or seek help for their mental health problems. Men are often expected to be the breadwinners and to be strong, dominant and in control.

Some research also suggests that men who can't speak openly about their emotions may be less able to recognise symptoms of mental health problems in themselves, and less likely to reach out for support. Men may also be more likely to use potentially harmful coping methods such as drugs or alcohol and less likely to talk to family or friends about their mental health.

When we consider men's mental health, it's hard to look beyond the fact that suicide is a leading cause of death for men up to the age of forty. The population with the highest frequency of deaths by suicide is men in middle age.

In 2019, there were 5,691 suicides registered in England and Wales, around three-quarters of these were men 4,303 deaths. (Office for National statistics 2020). Every week 125 people in the UK take their own lives and of these 75% are male. (CALM 2020).

If you want some tips on staying well make some simple changes such as talking about your feelings, keep active and eat well. Talking to a GP can make a big difference.

How to look after your mental health | Mental Health Foundation

Type 2 diabetes and men

Many people have Type 2 diabetes without realising. This is because symptoms do not necessarily make you feel unwell.

Diabetes especially Type 2, is more common in males rather than females. However, females often have more serious complications and a greater risk of death.

Symptoms include:

- peeing more than usual, particularly at night
- feeling thirsty all the time
- feeling very tired
- losing weight without trying to
- itching around your penis or repeatedly getting thrush
- cuts or wounds taking longer to heal
- blurred vision.

Hypertension (high blood pressure)

High blood pressure is known as the "silent Killer" as it rarely has symptoms and can go undetected. The importance of regular blood pressure checks is not to be underestimated. Having high blood pressure increases your risk of heart attack and stroke, so knowing your blood pressure could save your life.

As a general guide:

- Ideal blood pressure is between 90/60mmHg and 120/80mmHg.
- High blood pressure is 140/90mmHg or higher.
- Low blood pressure is 90/60mmHg or lower.

Around a third of adults in the UK have high blood pressure, although many will not realise it.

A greater percent of men (47%) have high blood pressure than women (43%). (CDC 2020).

References and resources

The Prostate Cancer Charity <https://prostatecanceruk.org/>

NHS Choices www.nhs.uk

NHS The Eatwell Guide – NHS (<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/>)

NHS Cancer Screening Programs <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-screening/>

Cancer Research UK www.cancerhelp.org.uk

Bowel Cancer UK www.bowelcanceruk.org.uk

The British Lung Foundation www.lunguk.org

NHS Direct On-line <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/>

Mental Health Foundation <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/blog/our-work-mens-mental-health>

Calm https://www.thecalmzone.net/help/get-help/?gclid=EAlaIQobChMIIMOZhKzr7AlVahkGAB3vWAmoEAAYAyAAEgl7b_D_BwE

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