



Health Promotion Toolbox

June 2016: Men's Health Month

Plan of the Week Notes

Week 1

Take steps now to develop healthier habits to improve your overall health for years to come.

Some health concerns affect men differently than women. When you are aware of health concerns specific to men, you can take better care of yourself. As an example, men are more likely to gain weight around their mid-section due to higher levels of testosterone than women.¹ Fat around the waist increases the risk for [heart disease and diabetes](#).¹ Men who are aware of this understand the importance of taking measures to maintain a healthy weight. Making healthy choices includes consulting [health professionals](#), and becoming educated on what preventive measures are most important for your health. For example, there are [preventive screenings](#) specifically suggested for men. During Men's Health Month, take steps to [take charge of your health](#) so that you can prevent negative health outcomes.

Week 2

Eat a healthy, properly portioned diet and exercise regularly to maintain a healthy weight.

Men who are overweight, obese, or physically inactive are at greater risk for high blood pressure, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and other health problems.² Maintaining a healthy weight is important to men, but this does not mean you need to diet and [hit the gym for hours at a time](#). [Choosing the right foods](#) can keep you feeling full longer and energized throughout the day to perform your duties. The best [foods for peak performance](#) are fruits, vegetables, lean protein, and whole grains. [Your average meal](#) should be colorful with ½ plate consisting of fruits and veggies, ¼ plate with lean protein, and ¼ plate with whole grains. In addition, in most cases, you can get the nutrients you need for top performance from food, rather than taking [potentially unsafe dietary supplements](#). You may believe you need to take supplements to boost energy before a workout and to build muscle, but to achieve optimal results you should [put real food first, and take supplements second](#).



Week 3

Protect your reproductive and sexual health by quitting smoking and all types of tobacco products, using protection, practicing safer sex, and getting screened. Quitting all forms of tobacco products prevents potential reproductive health issues. Smoking is a cause of erectile dysfunction and damages the DNA in sperm, which may lead to infertility.³ Smokeless tobacco, which men use at a higher rate than women, is dangerous too.³ It is a known cause of oral and pancreatic cancer, and reduced sperm count.³ In addition to quitting smoking, there are other steps men should take to maintain [good reproductive health](#). To prevent unplanned pregnancy and lower the risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), men should make the choice to use [protection](#) and practice [safer sex](#). Men should also consider being screened for STIs, including [Human Immunodeficiency Virus \(HIV\)](#), after unprotected sex, if you or your partner has multiple partners, or if you have a new partner, even if you do not have any symptoms.⁴ Men who have sex with men should ask for an HIV and syphilis test at least annually.⁴ Men at substantial risk for HIV, such as men who have sex with men, and men who have sex without using condoms with male or female partners whose HIV status is unknown, should ask their doctor about the HIV prevention pill, PrEP.⁵ The good news is, by [taking charge of your reproductive health](#) you can prevent these adverse health outcomes, and have positive and satisfying relationships.

Week 4

You work hard at your job, so make sure you take time to relax and navigate life's stressors in positive and safe ways. While social gatherings with friends and family are a great way to relax, you may be tempted to drink too much and make poor decisions, such as driving under the influence of alcohol. Almost one quarter of men binge drink, averaging nine drinks per binge.⁶ [Driving after drinking](#), even if you have just one beer, can increase your risk of an accident. Motor vehicle traffic is one of the leading causes of unintentional injury deaths for males ages 15-44.⁷ Long trips in motor vehicles, including on your [motorcycle](#), can cause fatigue, increasing your risk of an accident. When you practice these [driving safety tips](#), such as getting enough [sleep](#) and stopping to stretch every two hours, you will decrease your risk of getting into an accident. Aside from spending time with friends and family at social events and vacationing, there are ways to relax in your everyday life. Men experience depression differently from women and may be more likely to feel tired and irritable; lose interest in their work, family, or hobbies; or have more difficulty sleeping.⁸ Check out the [HPW Navigating Stress](#) Web page for guidance on ways to take care of yourself when you are feeling challenged and [stay positive](#) in the face of change.



Resources

- ¹ Healthy Eating for Men. Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. <http://www.eatright.org/resource/health/wellness/healthy-aging/healthy-eating-for-men>. Reviewed June 2014. Accessed April 2016.
- ² Getting on Track: Physical Activity and Healthy Eating for Men. National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. <http://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/health-topics/weight-control/gettingontrack/Pages/getting-on-track-physical-activity-and-healthy-eating-for-men.aspx>. Published December 2008. Accessed April 2016.
- ³ Tobacco Facts and Figures. About Tobacco. BeTobaccoFree.gov. <http://betobaccofree.hhs.gov/about-tobacco/facts-figures/>. Accessed April 2016.
- ⁴ Take Charge of Your Health: What You Need to Know About Preventive Services. National Coalition for Sexual Health. <http://nationalcoalitionforsexualhealth.org/tools/communicating-to-the-public/asset/NCSH-Sexual-Health-Guide-National.pdf>. Published 2015. Accessed April 2016.
- ⁵ Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/risk/prep/index.html>. Updated February 2016. Accessed April 2016.
- ⁶ Vital Signs: Binge Drinking Prevalence, Frequency, and Intensity Among Adults — United States, 2010. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. 61(01);14-19. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6101a4.htm?s_cid=mm6101a4_w. Updated 13 January 2012. Accessed April 2016.
- ⁷ Men's Summer Health and Safety Tips. Men's Health. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.cdc.gov/men/summer/index.htm>. Updated February 2015. Accessed April 2016.
- ⁸ Men and Depression. National Institute of Mental Health. <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/men-and-depression/index.shtml>. Updated 2013. Accessed April 2016.