



Health Promotion Toolbox

June: Men's Health Month

Message for Commanding Officers

Maintaining mission readiness means taking charge of one's overall health. When Sailors and Marines adopt healthier lifestyle behaviors they increase their operational readiness and also prevent chronic conditions.

Some health concerns affect men differently than women. While heart disease and cancer are both leading causes of death for men and women in the United States, accidents (unintentional injuries) are one of the top three leading causes of death for men, but not for women.^{1,2} When men are aware of health concerns specific to men, they can take better care of themselves. As an example, men are also susceptible for osteoporosis if they do not get enough calcium or do enough strength exercises.³ Men who are aware of this understand the importance of taking measures to maintain healthy habits. Male Sailors, Marines, and DoD civilians should take charge of their health and adopt healthy living habits that include eating healthy, being active, maintaining a healthy weight, managing stress, staying injury free, practicing safe sex, drinking in moderation, and being tobacco free.

During Men's Health Month, share resources that teach your male Sailors, Marines, and DoD civilians how to make healthier choices across the spectrum of men's health topics. Access the tools and resources by clicking on the blue, underlined hyperlinked text throughout the document. They'll become more knowledgeable about how their behaviors and lifestyle choices affect their overall health, which will encourage them to take steps now to improve their readiness and health for years to come!

What Can Leadership Do?

As a commanding officer you play an important role in promoting healthy lifestyle behaviors among your male Sailors and/or Marines:

- Your support is critical for health promotion success. Have the Command Triad support the Health Promotion and Wellness department with their planned events.
- Men who are overweight, obese, or physically inactive are at greater risk for high blood pressure, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and other health problems.⁴ Encourage Command Fitness Leaders to empower their command by demonstrating exercise programming and nutrition basics that can reinforce healthy weight.



- 16.7% of men currently smoke cigarettes and smokeless tobacco use is significantly higher among men than women.^{5,6} Set a command climate that promotes a [tobacco free lifestyle](#).
- Almost one quarter of men binge drink, averaging seven drinks per sitting.⁷ Create a command culture that is intolerant of underage and [irresponsible drinking behavior](#). Also, provide resources to support [good decision making](#) around alcohol consumption.
- 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 Provide the [Psychological and Emotional Well-Being Guide](#) to personnel to make help-seeking behavior the norm. The [Real Warriors website](#) has great resources.
- Around 38% of men ages 25-34 report they get less than 7 hours a sleep a day. Insufficient sleep has been linked to drowsy driving, diabetes, heart disease, obesity, depression and alzheimers. Listen to the CDC podcast [“Rest Easy”](#) to hear about the importance of getting enough sleep.

You can work with Health Promotion Coordinators and Command Fitness Leaders to:

- Let your male command members know about the [impact of men’s health on operational readiness](#).
- Share this [infographic](#) that describes ways men can address all areas of personal health.
- Educate your command about the importance of [taking charge of their health](#) so they can stay healthy in between health care provider visits.
- The #1 cause of death for men is still heart disease. Have them to to the [Heart Disease and Men](#) webpage from the CDC to learn of their risks and prevention strategies.
- Spread the word about the Veteran Administration’s [Screening Tests and immunizations for Men](#) webpage.
- Provide your command with a list of [10 nutrition tips for men’s health](#).
- Teach your command how to [make sexual health a priority](#), by sharing this article.
- Our Gay and Bisexual men have particular health concerns, so share [this website from the CDC](#) to encourage them to stay safe and healthy.
- Celebrate National Men’s Health Week June 13-19, 2016, by having your command learn about the [steps they can take each day to improve their overall health](#).



Resources

¹ Men's Health. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/mens-health.htm>. Updated May 2017. Accessed May 2018.

² Women's Health. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/womens-health.htm>. Updated May 2017. Accessed May 2018

³ Healthy Eating for Men. Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. <https://www.eatright.org/for-men> Reviewed June 2014. Accessed April 2016.

⁴ 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 May 2018.

⁵ Smoking and tobacco Use Fast Facts and Fact Sheets. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/index.htm. Page last updated April 2018. Accessed May 2018.

⁶ Tobacco products, Mens Heath and Smoking Website, US Food and Drug Administration, <https://www.fda.gov/TobaccoProducts/PublicHealthEducation/HealthInformation/ucm450272.htm> Updated Jan 2018. Accessed May 2018

⁷ Alcohol and Public Health, Fact Sheets – Binge Drinking, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/binge-drinking.htm> . Updated March 2018. Accessed May 2018.

⁸ Men and Depression. National Institute of Mental Health. <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/men-and-depression/index.shtml>. Updated January 2017. Accessed May 2018.

⁹ Sleep and Sleep Disorders, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/sleep/index.html> Updated February 2018. Accessed May 2018.

¹⁰ NIH Research Matters, Sleep deprivation increases Alzheimer's protein, <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/nih-research-matters/sleep-deprivation-increases-alzheimers-protein> Published April 24, 2018. Accessed May 2018.