

# Important Men's Health Information

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## From Mayo Clinic Staff

Do you know the top men's health threats? The list is surprisingly short — including heart disease, cancer and unintentional injury. Thankfully, most men's health threats are largely preventable. Make healthy lifestyle choices, such as eating a healthy diet and including physical activity in your daily routine. It's also important to manage risky behavior, such as drinking too much and engaging in casual sex. Of course, common-sense precautions — such as using safety ladders and wearing a seat belt — count, too.

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are mostly preventable.**

# Here's what you need to know to live a longer, healthier life.

**By Mayo Clinic staff**

Do you know the greatest threats to men's health? The list is surprisingly short — and prevention pays off. Consider this top 10 list of men's health threats, compiled from statistics provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other leading organizations. Then take steps to promote men's health and reduce your risks.

## No. 1 — Heart disease

Heart disease is a leading men's health threat. Take charge of heart health by making healthier lifestyle choices. For example:

- Don't smoke or use other tobacco products. Avoid exposure to secondhand smoke.
- Eat a healthy diet rich in vegetables, fruits, whole grains, fiber and fish. Cut back on foods high in saturated fat and sodium.
- If you have high cholesterol or high blood pressure, follow your doctor's treatment recommendations.
- Include physical activity in your daily routine.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- If you choose to drink alcohol, do so only in moderation. Too much alcohol can raise blood pressure.
- If you have diabetes, keep your blood sugar under control.
- Manage stress.

## No. 2 — Cancer

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths among men — mostly due to cigarette smoking, according to the American Cancer Society. Lung cancer is followed by prostate cancer and colorectal cancer. To prevent cancer:

- Don't smoke or use other tobacco products. Avoid exposure to secondhand smoke.
- Include physical activity in your daily routine.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Eat a healthy diet rich in fruits and vegetables, and avoid high-fat foods.
- Limit your sun exposure. When you're outdoors, use sunscreen.
- If you choose to drink alcohol, do so only in moderation.
- Consult your doctor for regular cancer screenings.
- Reduce exposure to potential cancer-causing substances (carcinogens), such as radon, asbestos, radiation and air pollution.

## No. 3 — Injuries

The leading cause of fatal accidents among men is motor vehicle crashes, according to the CDC. To reduce your risk of a deadly crash:

- Wear your seat belt.
- Follow the speed limit.
- Don't drive under the influence of alcohol or any other substances.
- Don't drive while sleepy.

Falls and poisoning are other leading causes of fatal accidents. Take common-sense precautions, such as using chemical products only in ventilated areas, using nonslip mats in the bathtub and placing carbon monoxide detectors near the bedrooms in your home.

## No. 4 — Stroke

You can't control some stroke risk factors, such as family history, age and race. But you can control other contributing factors. For example:

- Don't smoke.
- If you have high cholesterol or high blood pressure, follow your doctor's treatment recommendations.
- Limit the amount of saturated fat and cholesterol in your diet. Try to avoid trans fat entirely.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Include physical activity in your daily routine.
- If you have diabetes, keep your blood sugar under control.
- If you choose to drink alcohol, do so only in moderation.

## No. 5 — COPD

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is a group of chronic lung conditions, including bronchitis and emphysema. To prevent COPD:

- Don't smoke. Avoid exposure to secondhand smoke.

## No. 6 — Type 2 diabetes

Type 2 diabetes — the most common type of diabetes — affects the way your body uses blood sugar (glucose). Possible complications of type 2 diabetes include heart disease, blindness, nerve damage and kidney damage. To prevent type 2 diabetes:

- Lose excess pounds, if you're overweight.
- Eat a healthy diet rich in fruits, vegetables and low-fat foods.
- Include physical activity in your daily routine.

## No. 7 — Flu

Influenza is a common viral infection. While a case of the flu isn't usually serious for otherwise healthy adults, complications of the flu can be deadly — especially for those who have weak immune systems or chronic illnesses. To protect yourself from the flu, get an annual flu vaccine.

## No. 8 — Suicide

Suicide is another leading men's health risk. An important risk factor for suicide among men is depression. If you think you may be depressed, consult your doctor. Treatment is available. If you're contemplating suicide, call for emergency medical help or go the nearest emergency room. You can also call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-TALK (800-273-8255).

## No. 9 — Kidney disease

Kidney failure is often a complication of diabetes or high blood pressure. If you have diabetes or high blood pressure, follow your doctor's treatment suggestions. In addition:

- Eat a healthy diet. Limit the amount of salt you consume.
- Include physical activity in your daily routine.
- Lose excess pounds, if you're overweight.
- Take medications as prescribed.

## No. 10 — Alzheimer's disease

There's no proven way to prevent Alzheimer's disease, but consider taking these steps:

- Take care of your heart. High blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, diabetes and high cholesterol may increase the risk of developing Alzheimer's.
- Avoid head injuries. There appears to be a link between head injury and future risk of Alzheimer's.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Include physical activity in your daily routine.
- Avoid tobacco.
- If you choose to drink alcohol, do so only in moderation.
- Stay socially active.
- Maintain mental fitness. Practice mental exercises, and take steps to learn new things.

## Your bottom line: Take health threats seriously

Health risks can be scary, but there's no reason to panic. Instead, do everything you can to lead a healthy lifestyle — eating a healthy diet, staying physically active, quitting smoking, getting regular checkups and taking precautions in your daily activities. Adopting these preventive measures will increase your odds of living a long, healthy life.