

No News Is *NOT* Good News

Men are less likely than women to get routine physical exams and screenings, but it's never too late for a fresh start.

The Heart of a Man

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for men in the United States, killing 357,761 men in 2019 — that's about 1 in every 4 male deaths.

The following conditions put men at a greater risk for heart disease. Your physical exam with your primary care provider should include these important screenings:

HYPERTENSION: Thirty-three percent of men aged 20 and over have hypertension. Having uncontrolled blood pressure can result in heart disease. High blood pressure has no symptoms so it's important to have your blood pressure checked regularly. *Learn more about hypertension.*

CHOLESTEROL: Get this checked every five years; if you have risk factors for heart disease, discuss with your doctor whether you should be tested more frequently. Discuss checking your cholesterol and triglyceride levels with your health care provider. *Learn more about cholesterol.*

DIABETES: If you are age 40 to 70 and overweight or obese, you should be tested for diabetes. *Learn more about diabetes.*

BODY MASS INDEX: The combination of weight and height determines your BMI — the most widely used measure to determine if you are overweight or obese. Measure weight annually and height once every 10 years past age 50.

A survey by the American Academy of Family Physicians found that 55 percent of men surveyed had not seen their doctor for a physical exam in the previous year, even though 40 percent of them had at least one chronic condition. Nearly one-fifth of men ages 55 and over said they had never undergone a screening for colon cancer, and almost 30 percent said they "wait as long as possible" to seek medical attention when they are feeling sick or in pain.

But "waiting as long as possible" is never the best option. Waiting allows the condition to progress and seriously diminishes the possibility of an excellent outcome.

Cardiovascular disease and cancer — two main killers of men — can have an excellent prognosis should they be detected and treated in their earliest stages. For these conditions, there are several screenings your health care provider can painlessly conduct or prescribe during your physical exam.

Early Cancer Detection Can Save Your Life!

The second leading cause of death in men is cancer, and, according to the CDC, the leading three causes of cancer death in men are:

- Lung cancer
- Prostate cancer
- Colorectal cancer

LUNG CANCER

Lung cancer is the most common cause of cancer death for men and the most preventable form of cancer. Cigarette smoking causes 90% of lung cancer.

Screenings using a low-dose CT scan of the chest can reduce deaths from lung cancer by as much as 20 percent. A study took 32,000 patients who were smokers and gave each of them a low-dose CT scan. Of those patients, 31,567 were diagnosed with lung cancer and a very high percentage had Stage I cancer, which is the very early stage. 88 percent of patients with Stage 1 cancer have a 10-year survival rate compared with survival rates from 6.3 months to 11.4 months for Stage 4 lung cancer.

PROSTATE CANCER

While preventing prostate cancer may not be possible, early detection does save lives. Discuss with your doctor whether you should have a prostate cancer screening.

COLORECTAL CANCER

According to the CDC, many people with colon cancer have no symptoms in the early stages. Early detection saves lives. Start prevention health screenings at age 45 or earlier if you have a family history of colon cancer or other risk factors.

Get Your Screenings and Save Your Life

While most men prefer to do anything but visit their primary care physician, early detection and health screenings are the most effective way to prevent and treat diseases that plague the virility and vitality of men. Simple physical examinations today can successfully prevent long-term, chronic and devastating illnesses that will wreak havoc tomorrow. Schedule (and keep) your appointment with your primary care physician today.

Sources: cdc.gov, today.com, health.harvard.edu, dph.illinois.gov, jamanetwork.com, ge.com

