



# Men: 7 ways to take better care of your health



For years, men's life expectancy has trailed behind that of women. While the gap has been closing recently, men continue to die on average almost five years sooner than women. There are many reasons for this – heart disease, which affects men more than women, catastrophic cancers at later ages and higher incidences of smoking and excessive alcohol use.

Men also remain more likely than women to skip regular checkups and delay medical care. Fortunately, many health problems can be addressed by simple behavioral changes.

## What you can do

According to research reported in the Journal of the American Medical Association, men who take care of their health in midlife are more likely to live longer. Here are the most important things they can do:

### 1. Get screened.

Screening tests can detect diseases early, when they are easier to treat. There are screening tests for obesity, high cholesterol, hypertension, colorectal cancer and diabetes. Men need to ask their doctors which screening tests they need and when.

### 2. Don't smoke.

Tobacco damages the entire body and causes an increased risk for heart disease and diabetes, as well as cancer.

### 3. Exercise.

Just 30 minutes of moderate physical activity most days of the week can yield tremendous health benefits.

### 4. Eat a healthy diet.

The best way to get all the nutrients the body needs is to eat a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean meats – all in moderation.



### 5. Maintain a healthy weight.

Excess weight contributes to many health problems, including heart disease and diabetes.

### 6. Go easy on the alcohol.

Men should have no more than two drinks a day.

### 7. Self-check

Does walking up the stairs cause excess fatigue when in the past it did not? It could be a sign of impending heart trouble. You can also check for testicular cancers, the most common form of cancer in men ages 15-35. Bottom line, do not dismiss your physical changes as merely 'just getting old'.