



Men's Health Toolkit for 2026

An educational guide to understanding important topics related to men's health.

In recognition of **Men's Health Month**, this Toolkit was created to help men maintain and improve their health. Men's Health Month is a time to encourage men to take an active role in their well-being by scheduling regular checkups, staying current on preventative screenings, building healthy habits, and seeking support when needed.

Topics Included in This Toolkit

- PREVENTIVE HEALTH
- NUTRITION
- PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
- SAFETY
- MENTAL HEALTH
- ALCOHOL



PREVENTIVE HEALTH



Preventive healthcare helps men live longer and healthier lives. On average, men die several years earlier than women, often from conditions like heart disease, stroke, lung disease, cancer, and injuries. Many of these conditions do not show clear symptoms. (Robert H. Shmerling, 2020)

Regular checkups, health tests, and healthy daily habits can help find problems early, improve how well treatment works, and lower the risk of serious illness. Screening advice can change based on age, lifestyle, family history, military service, and other health risks. Your doctor may suggest a personalized plan tailored to your needs. The following screening recommendations can help start the conversation:

Men’s Health Screening Recommendations (USPSTF, 2025)

SCREENING TEST	RECOMMENDED AGE	FREQUENCY / NOTES
Cholesterol	20+	Screen at age 35 and older, 20 and older if at increased risk
Blood Pressure	6+	Every two years above age 6
Diabetes (A1C or fasting glucose)	18+	Adults with high blood pressure, or age 35-70 if overweight or obese
Colon Cancer	45+ (earlier if at risk)	Routine screening; interval depends on test type
Prostate Cancer (PSA)	45-50+	Exam at age 50, age 45
Lung Cancer (LDCT)	50–80	Annual if eligible; High risk-smokers should be screened
Skin Cancer	18+	Self-exams; periodic provider exams
Vision Exam	18+	Every 1–2 years; annually after 65
Hearing Test	50+ (earlier if symptoms)	Every 3–10 years; more often if hearing loss suspected
Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA)	65–75	One-time ultrasound screening; High risk smokers should be screened
HIV Screening*	18+	At least once; more often if risk factors
Hepatitis C Screening	18+	At least once; repeat if risk continues
Mental Health Screening	18+	As needed or during routine visits
STI Screening**	18+	At least annually if at risk; more often if high risk
Dental Exam	18+	Every 6–12 months

*HIV – Human Immunodeficiency Virus **STI – Sexually Transmitted Infection

CANCER IN MEN: Key Facts

Cancer is one of the main causes of death among men. The three most common cancers in men are prostate, colon, and lung cancer. Early detection through regular screenings can help improve treatment outcomes and may stop cancer from spreading. (Society, 2026)

Understanding the warning signs, knowing your personal risk factors, and staying up to date with recommended tests are important steps in protecting your health.

Common Cancers in Men

Cancer Type	Risk Factors	Common Signs & Symptoms	Common Screening Tests	Prevention Tips
Prostate Cancer	Age over 50, family history, African American ethnicity, obesity	Problems urinating, blood in urine, erectile dysfunction, pelvic pain, weight loss, fatigue	PSA blood test, digital rectal exam (DRE), prostate MRI, prostate biopsy (if abnormal results)	Maintain healthy weight, exercise regularly, discuss family history with provider
Colon Cancer	Age over 45, family history, smoking, obesity, poor diet, inactivity	Changes in bowel habits, constant urge for bowel movement, rectal bleeding, abdominal pain, weight loss, weakness/fatigue	FIT, FOBT, stool DNA test (Cologuard), colonoscopy, CT colonography, flexible sigmoidoscopy	Eat high-fiber foods, stay active, limit processed meats/ alcohol, complete routine screenings
Lung Cancer	Smoking/tobacco use, secondhand smoke, radon exposure, occupational exposure	Persistent cough, coughing up blood or rust-colored sputum, chest pain, shortness of breath, wheezing, fatigue	Low-dose CT (LDCT) scan, chest X-ray (less commonly used), sputum cytology (in some cases)	Avoid tobacco products, avoid secondhand smoke, get screened if high risk

Why Screening Matters

Early detection and routine healthcare visits can:

- ✓ **Catch cancer before it spreads**
- ✓ **Improve treatment success rates**
- ✓ **Reduce complications**
- ✓ **Increase survival rates**

Prevention & Awareness

Men can lower their risk by:

- ✓ **Staying up to date with recommended screenings**
- ✓ **Avoiding tobacco use (major risk factor for lung cancer)**
- ✓ **Maintaining a healthy diet and weight**
- ✓ **Staying physically active**
- ✓ **Discussing family history with a healthcare provider**



NUTRITION

Nutrition is one of the most important parts of good health! Your body needs good nutrition to function properly. What you eat affects your energy, weight, heart health, immune system, muscle strength, and overall quality of life. Poor nutrition can lead to muscle loss, low energy, decreased physical performance, and problems like heart disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity, and some cancers. (Abdulla A. Damluji, 2023)

Men need more calories and nutrients than women because they tend to have more muscle mass and higher metabolic rates. Men also need adequate protein and healthy fats to support hormone production and promote heart health.

The most recent dietary recommendations from the USDA encourage Americans to focus on nutrient dense foods. The new guidelines emphasize protein at every meal, healthy fats, whole grains, and fruits and vegetables while limiting processed foods and added sugars.

A new, re-designed food pyramid has been created to encourage all Americans to eat **whole foods**.



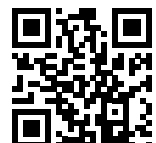
Here are some highlights:

- ✓ **Focus on WHOLE, MINIMALLY PROCESSED foods.**
- ✓ **Eat protein at every meal; include things like eggs, chicken, meat, seafood, and red meat. Vegetarians may choose eggs, dairy, beans, lentils, nuts, and seeds.**
- ✓ **Eat healthy fats from meats, eggs, full fat dairy, seafoods, olives and avocados.**
- ✓ **Fats for cooking include olive oil, butter, and tallow.**
- ✓ **Fill half of your plate with fruits and vegetables every day for variety.**
- ✓ **Stay away from white bread, breakfast cereals, crackers, and flour tortillas. Switch to whole grains (oatmeal, whole-wheat bread, brown rice, etc.).**
- ✓ **AVOID soda, sports drinks, and juice; choose water or milk instead.**

BOTTOM LINE: EAT REAL FOOD!

Choose nutrient-dense foods and build your meals around quality protein, healthy fats, fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. These foods help support energy, muscle health, heart health, and overall well-being. **Avoid highly processed foods and added sugars.**

**For more details visit
RealFood.gov**





PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Staying active is another important thing men can do for their health. It helps men decrease the risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and cancer.

Regular exercise:

- Improves mood and decreases the risk of depression
- Gives you more energy
- Helps to maintain a healthy weight
- Improves sexual health

Only about half of U.S. men get enough exercise. The recommended amount is about 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week, plus muscle strengthening work about twice a week. (Nazik Elgaddal, 2026)

Men who work in trades like construction, plumbing, or electrical work often meet daily exercise recommendations through lifting, climbing, carrying things, and other movement while on the job.

For men who have a desk job, are retired, or do not get much physical activity during the day, there are many simple ways to add exercise to daily life:

- **Yard work can be great exercise.** Activities such as mowing the lawn with a push mower, raking leaves, digging, hauling branches, and shoveling snow can provide moderate to vigorous physical activity. These tasks can help burn calories and build strength.



- **Stay active with household projects.** Painting, cleaning the garage, moving furniture, carrying groceries, and completing home repairs all require movement and can help increase daily physical activity.
- **Make errands more active.** Park farther away from store entrances and take the stairs instead of the elevator. Small choices like these can add up over time.
- **Use your lunch break to move.** A brisk walk during lunch can improve fitness and increase energy levels.
- **Keep exercise equipment nearby.** Having a kettlebell, dumbbells, resistance bands, or a pull-up bar at home can make it easier to stay active. Try to include short periods of movement or exercise throughout the day.



SAFETY



According to the CDC, unintentional injuries remain one of the leading causes of death in the United States. Common causes are motor vehicle crashes, falls, and accidents in the workplace. **Male workers account for the majority of serious on the job injuries and deaths.** (CDC, Traumatic Occupational Injuries, 2022)

The reason is that men are more likely to work in jobs that involve heavy machinery, driving, construction, or heights. Men are also more likely to take risks, such as speeding, using equipment unsafely, or working while tired or distracted. Taking safety seriously at home, on the road, and at work can help prevent injuries and save lives.

Common Injuries and How to Prevent Them:

Falls (such as from ladders)	Using ladders at any height can be risky. Check ladders before using them, maintain 3 points of contact when climbing, ensure ladder feet are on steady ground, and never stand on the top rung. Use fall protection equipment when working at heights.
Motor Vehicle Crashes	Always wear a seatbelt, follow the speed limit, avoid distractions, don't drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
Cuts and Lacerations	Use power tools correctly. Read the manufacturer's instructions, keep safety guards in place, and don't remove them. Wear safety glasses and hearing protection.
Struck-by Injuries	In the workplace take safety training seriously, report unsafe conditions or damaged equipment. Always wear protective equipment, including hard hats, safety glasses, face shields, steel-toed boots, and high visibility clothing.

DON'T DELAY!

A common safety issue is that some men tend to delay medical care. They put off visits to the doctor thinking that problems will go away on their own, or they say they're too busy. Sometimes they feel they can just "tough it out." Delaying medical care can allow minor health concerns to become more serious. If something doesn't feel right, get it checked out. Don't ignore it or try to push through it.

Safety is not about being overly cautious—it is about making smart decisions that protect your health and well-being.



PRIORITIZING MENTAL HEALTH

Strength is often seen as important for men, and it can be a good thing. But real strength is more than dealing with problems alone. It also means knowing yourself, handling feelings, and asking for help when needed.

It is not uncommon for men to face mental health challenges, though they may not be comfortable talking about them. Asking for help is a strong choice; it shows courage and growth.

About 1 in 5 men in the U.S. experience mental health challenges, yet many never get treatment. (NIMH, 2024) Veterans may face added stress from deployments, PCS moves, and transitioning to civilian life. This can increase the risks of PTSD and depression.

Breaking the stigma starts with open conversations and support. Mental health matters just as much as physical health, and no one should be ashamed to ask for help.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, signs of mental health challenges in men may look different than expected. Signs can include:

- Anger, irritability, or aggressiveness
- Changes in mood, energy, or appetite
- Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much
- Trouble focusing, feeling restless, or on edge
- Increased worry or feeling stressed
- Misuse of alcohol, drugs, or both
- Persistent sadness or feelings of hopelessness
- Feeling flat or having trouble feeling positive emotions
- Engaging in high-risk activities
- Aches, headaches, or digestive problems without a clear cause
- Obsessive thinking or compulsive behavior
- Thoughts or behaviors that interfere with work, family, or social life
- Thoughts of death or suicide or suicide attempts

Ways to support your Mental Health

- Build a strong support system. Talk openly with friends and family
- Stay physically active
- Seek counseling or peer support groups
- Create healthy daily routines
- Prioritize sleep and nutrition
- Find hobbies and activities you enjoy
- Seek professional help when needed, start with seeing your healthcare provider

IMPORTANT NOTE— if you are having thoughts of suicide or of harming yourself or others in any way: Warning signs may include thinking about wanting to die, feelings of hopelessness, withdrawing from others, or sudden severe mood changes. Help is available, please reach out:

Call 988
to reach the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department if you are in immediate risk **USFHP is here to help with mental health.** Covered benefits include outpatient therapy, psychiatric care, substance use disorder treatment, intensive outpatient programs (IOPs), partial hospitalization programs (PHPs), and inpatient psychiatric hospitalizations. **Office-based, outpatient mental health services by an authorized TRICARE® network provider do not require a referral.** If you need assistance getting started with mental health care, call our USFHP Behavioral Health Case Managers at **1-800-241-4848, option #2.**



ALCOHOL

Moderate alcohol use means up to two standard drinks per day for men. A standard drink is equal to:

- **One 12-ounce beer**
- **One 5-ounce glass of wine**
- **One 1.5-ounce shot of distilled spirits**

For men, drinking alcohol regularly—especially in large amounts—can harm your health in several ways. Heavy alcohol use can lower testosterone levels and contribute to sexual health problems like erectile dysfunction. It also increases the risk of high blood pressure, liver disease, certain cancers, and mental health issues. Binge drinking—five or more drinks on one occasion—can cause a number of long-term health problems. (CDC, Alcohol Use and Your Health, 2025)

If you like to drink, moderation is important. Limiting alcohol can protect your heart, liver, sleep, and overall health. Try to stay within two standard drinks per day or less. Helpful strategies include setting a limit before you start drinking, alternating alcoholic drinks with water, eating before or while drinking, and choosing smaller servings or lower-alcohol options.

For some men, the healthiest choice is to not drink at all. Avoiding alcohol is especially important if you have a family history of alcohol problems, if you find it hard to control your drinking, or if you have medical conditions such as liver disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, or certain heart conditions.

Problem drinking happens when alcohol use starts to negatively affect your health, relationships, work, or daily life. If you are unsure about your drinking habits, you can take the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT), a short and confidential screening tool available online at:

auditscreen.org



USFHP is here to help if you have a problem with drinking. Treatment for alcohol and drugs is a covered benefit. A USFHP Behavioral Health Case Manager can help you find treatment in your area. If you feel you need help, call **1-800-241-4848, option #2.**

Have a HAPPY MEN'S HEALTH MONTH!

Stay strong, active, and healthy by making time for preventive care, practicing healthy habits, and seeking help when needed!



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

USFHP Behavioral Health Case Management: 1-800-241-4848, option 2

Veterans Crisis Line

Free, confidential support is available 24/7, 365 days a year. The Veterans Crisis Line serves Veterans, service members, National Guard and Reserve members, and those who support them.

- Call: **988, then Press 1**
- Text: **838255**
- Online Chat: **VeteransCrisisLine.net**



Vet Center Call Center:

Free and confidential support is available 24/7. Staff members include combat Veterans from several eras and family members of combat Veterans.

- Call: **1-877-927-8387**

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

Free, confidential support is available 24/7, 365 days a year.

- Call: **988**
- Text: **988**
- Online chat: **<https://chat.988lifeline.org/>**



Military OneSource

Free, confidential support is available 24/7 for eligible active-duty service members, National Guard and Reserve members, military spouses and families, survivors, and recently separated or retired service members for up to 365 days after separation. Contact Military OneSource to confirm eligibility.

- Call: **1-800-342-9647**
- Online chat: **<https://www.militaryonesourceconnect.org/chat>**



SAMHSA National Helpline

Free, confidential 24/7 treatment referral and information service for individuals and families facing substance use disorders: **1-800-662-HELP [4357]**

In life-threatening situations, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.

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Take control of your health — for yourself and your family!



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