

MEN'S HEALTH

Australian men are more likely than Australian women to get sick from serious health problems. Their mortality rate is also much higher, as men die in greater numbers than women from almost every non-sex-specific health problem. Compared to women, men are less inclined to take an active role in maintaining their health and visit the doctor less frequently, usually only attending when their illness is in its later stages. They are also less likely to seek professional help for problems, particularly those of an emotional nature. Unfortunately, the fear of finding out or not appearing 'macho' affects men's health every day.



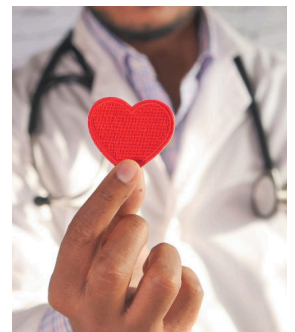
PROSTATE CANCER

Each year in Australia, close to 3000 men die of prostate cancer - equal to the number of women who die from breast cancer annually. Around 18,700 new cases are diagnosed in Australia every year. One in 11 Australian men will develop prostate cancer by age 70. The strongest risk factor is age and the chance of developing the disease rises rapidly after age 50, however younger men with a history of prostate cancer in their family are at a greater risk. Prostate cancer is complicated, as some cancers grow very slowly and don't threaten life, while others grow more rapidly and do. It is recommended that you take an active role in your decision on testing, and if you develop cancer, how you choose to be treated.

Prostate cancer can be cured if detected and treated while still confined to the prostate gland. The tests for prostate cancer are the prostate specific antigen (PSA) blood test and the digital rectal examination. These tests do not give a conclusive diagnosis of cancer but can indicate the presence of prostate cancer.

There are four main disorders of the prostate. All can have similar symptoms, which may include one or more of the following:

- Waking frequently at night to urinate
- Sudden or urgent need to urinate
- Difficulty in starting to urinate
- Slow urine flow and difficulty stopping
- Discomfort when urinating
- Painful ejaculation
- Blood in the urine or semen
- Decrease in libido
- Reduced ability to get an erection



MEN'S MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health issues are more difficult to acknowledge and address than physical disorders but the symptoms and the impact on our lives are just as real. Men have a higher risk of some lifestyle-related diseases than women. Men and women typically handle emotions in quite different ways too; women are likely to express their feelings directly and seek the support of friends and family, whereas men might typically hide their emotions or withdraw. Men often feel uncomfortable talking about their emotions or admitting how they are feeling, which may help explain why men are more likely to commit suicide than women.



Symptoms of mental health issues may include:

- Moodiness
- Social withdrawal
- Aggression
- Life crisis
- Personality changes
- Feelings of worthlessness
- Depression
- Substance abuse
- Thoughts or comments about suicide

Depression affects both men and women, but quite often what they experience and how they respond is different. Lack of understanding and misconceptions about depression contribute to the stigma associated with the condition. Studies suggest that men are at greater risk of their depression going unrecognised and untreated than women. Perhaps this is part of the male image of self-reliance: 'take charge', 'I can cope', 'don't be weak'. Men may become aware of the physical symptoms of depression, such as feeling tired, withdrawn or losing weight, or become irritable or angry, rather than acknowledging feeling sad or depressed. It's common for men to use alcohol to mask the stress, though in the end this makes things worse.

For information or support, call **LifeLine 13 11 14** or **Beyond Blue 1300 22 4636**

HEALTHY HEART

Heart disease is one of the leading causes of death among men in Australia and New Zealand, with males aged 25-74 years two to three times more likely to die from heart disease than women. For a 40 year old man, the risk of developing heart disease at some time in the future is one in two. The good news is that a healthy lifestyle, including a balanced diet and exercise, has a positive effect on your heart and can help to prevent an early death from failure of this vital organ.

In order to keep your Heart Happy, you need to Treat it with Respect:

- Don't smoke
- Control your body weight
- Enjoy a healthy diet with a variety of foods from the core food groups
- Limit your intake of foods high in trans fats such as processed foods, take-away and fried foods, and be wary of too much saturated fat in fatty meats, cheese, butter and cream
- Drink alcohol in moderation
- Keep active – aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity, such as brisk walking, on all or most days of the week
- Have regular check-ups with your doctor
- Have your blood cholesterol tested and know your level of 'good' and 'bad' blood fats
- Get your blood pressure checked regularly
- Manage your stress levels

Men should have regular health checks. See your doctor for regular medical check-ups to help you stay healthy and to pick up early warning signs of disease or illness. Cardiovascular disease, diabetes and some cancers can often be picked up in their early stages, when treatment may be more successful.

For more information, see your GP, or visit www.malehealth.org.au or www.au.movember.com

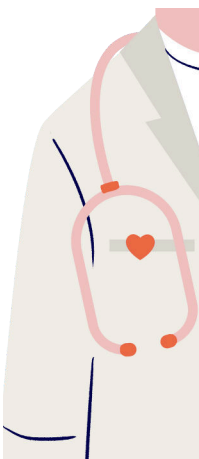
SEXUAL HEALTH

Men don't like talking about their health and may feel uncomfortable asking questions about their sexual health. Being comfortable with our sexuality and our bodies is important. Having questions about how our bodies work and why we feel a certain way is natural and inevitable.

Erectile Dysfunction (ED) is the inability to get and/or keep an erection that allows sexual activity with penetration. According to Andrology Australia it is not a disease, but a symptom of some other problem, either physical, psychological or a mixture of of both. ED is very common and becomes even more common in older men, with at least one in five men over the age of 40 years experiencing erectile problems. With each decade of age, the chance of having erectile problems increases. Medical conditions account for 80% of cases of ED, while psychological causes are responsible for the remaining 20%.

Causes Include:

- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Depression
- Stress
- Heart disease
- High cholesterol
- Prostate surgery
- High blood pressure
- Anxiety and relationship issues
- Smoking and peripheral vascular disease



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