

## Top Threats to Your Health and What You Can Do

### 1. Depression and Suicide

- If life is getting you down, let us know. Like other medical problems, depression can be successfully treated. It is a sign of strength, not weakness, to get help. Suicide is the most common cause of death in men ages 15-44.

### 2. Accidents- most are preventable

- Wear seatbelts, don't text and drive, don't drink and drive (or go with those who do). Motor vehicle accidents are the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of death in men up to age 24.  
- Limit alcohol to no more than 2 drinks per day (if over 21).  
- Keep guns locked up and store ammo separately.  
- Make sure smoke / carbon monoxide detectors work.

### 3. Drugs

- Not only are they illegal, they really can mess you up. Poisonings, including alcohol and drug overdoses, is the 3<sup>rd</sup> leading cause of death for men 15-24. Whether it is street drugs or someone's prescription meds, it is much easier to not start than to try to stop. If you are hooked, ask about ways to get your life back.

### 4. Sexual health

- Women often don't know if they have a STD. Every sexual encounter can expose you to anything she has picked up from her past partners. Most STDs are caused by viruses (herpes, warts, hepatitis, HIV); once you have these, you will always have it. Condoms offer some protection but are far from perfect and have to be used perfectly every time. Better to abstain or stay with a single partner.

### 5. Keep Your Heart Healthy (Biggest long-term threat)

- **Don't smoke.** It doubles your chance of a heart attack.  
- **Blood pressure** – check yearly and treat if high (over 140/90)  
- **Cholesterol** – check every 5 years, more often if high risk  
- **Diabetes**- check every 3 years if at risk or if runs in family  
- What you do every day (good diet, regular exercise, maintain healthy weight) is more important than any tests

### 6. Cancer

- **Testicular cancer** is the most common in this age group. Self-exams are not recommended but have anything abnormal checked (usually painless bump directly on the testicle).  
- **Skin cancer**- Avoid tanning beds. Wear a hat and sunscreen whenever in the sun; have moles that change in size, shape or color checked-out  
- Eat a **healthy diet**, low in saturated fat and high in fruits and vegetables. No vitamin or supplement has been shown to decrease the risk of cancer.

### 7. Chronic Lung Disease/ Emphysema

- **Quit smoking.** Also keeps your teeth white, avoids ashtray breath, makes breathing enjoyable, and helps prevent emphysema and lung cancer. Think of the money you'll save.

### 8. The couch and video games

- Exercise is good for every part of you- improves energy, makes you feel good, keeps your heart strong, helps keep your weight in check and raises testosterone.  
- You don't have to go to the gym—even a 20 minute walk is a good start. Get active before hitting the X-box.

### **Recommendations for Healthy Living**

1. Don't smoke. Ask if you need help quitting
2. Maintain a healthy weight.
3. Eat more healthy foods. Increase your intake of fruits, vegetables and fiber. Eat less animal fat and processed foods
4. Drink lots of water and avoid sweetened beverages.
5. Limit alcohol to 2 drinks a day. Ask for help if alcohol has become a problem for you.
6. Exercise. Get on your feet! Work up to walking or moderate exercise 30 minutes at least 5 days a week.
7. Get enough sleep
8. Avoid overexposure to the sun
9. Listen to your body-- when things aren't right, get it checked out
10. Let us know if you feel depressed most days for more than 2 weeks or if you feel like life isn't worth living.

### **Prevent problems now**

#### **Immunizations**

- Tetanus-pertussis – every 10 years
- Flu shot- yearly
- Meningitis vaccine- if in high school or college
- Consider HPV vaccination against genital warts

#### **Blood tests**

- Cholesterol- at least every 5 years
- Blood sugar- if overweight or diabetes in family
- HIV test- if at risk

#### **Cancer screening**

- Testicular self-exam is no longer recommended

# ***Our Goal... Your Good Health***

**Recommendations for Healthy Living  
from Your Family Physician**

**Men 15 to 29**

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Specializing in You and Your Family

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