

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. Drugs and alcohol

- Poisoning, including alcohol and drug overdoses, is the 2nd leading cause of death for men 25-44. Whether it is street drugs or someone's prescription pain 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.

3. Heart Disease and Stroke (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
- **Diabetes**- check every 3 years if at risk or if runs in family
- **Know the symptoms** and don't wait to call for help

A heart attack can cause pain, heaviness, or pressure in the chest, neck or arms. Nausea, shortness of breath and sweating can also occur.

A stroke or brain attack can start as sudden weakness on one side of the body, difficulty speaking, understanding, or walking. If you think you may be having a heart attack or stroke, call 911; the longer symptoms occur, the more damage can be done.

4. Accidents- most are preventable

- Wear your seatbelt (or helmet for bike/motorcycles)
- Limit alcohol to no more than 2 drinks per day
- Keep guns locked up and store ammo separately
- Make sure smoke / carbon monoxide detectors work

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 one, 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. Cancer

- If it runs in the family or are having symptoms, you may need tests earlier or more often than recommended for those at average risk
- **Lung cancer**- Avoid cigarette smoke; test home for radon
- **Colon cancer**- Start screening tests at age 50 unless having changes in bowel habits or blood in stool
- **Prostate cancer**- Testing not recommended until age 45 and then only if African-American or if family history
- **Skin cancer**- Wear a hat and sunscreen whenever in the sun; get moles checked that change in size, shape or color
- 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.

6. Chronic Lung Disease/ Emphysema

- **Quit smoking.** Also keeps your teeth white, avoids ashtray breath, makes breathing enjoyable, and helps prevent cancer.

7. Inactivity

- You don't have to go to the gym or get hot and sweaty—even a 20 minute walk at lunchtime is a good start.

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
- Pneumonia vaccine if chronic illness (cancer, diabetes, kidney disease, asthma, COPD, smoking)

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 30 to 49

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