

Top Threats to Your Health and What You Can Do

1. Heart Disease and Stroke (Biggest long-term risk)

- **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, do something about it!
- **Diabetes**- check every 3 years if at risk or if runs in family
- **Know your risk-** <http://tools.cardiosource.org/ASCVD-Risk-Estimator/>

if your risk is over 7.5% or if you have diabetes, kidney problems or have had heart problems, take a statin medicine

if your risk is over 4% and you don't have risk factors for stomach bleeding, take a 81mg aspirin daily

- **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

2. Depression and Suicide

- If life is getting you down, let us know. Like other medical problems, depression can be successfully treated. Suicide is the second most common cause of death in this age group.

3. Drugs and alcohol

- Liver disease and poisoning from alcohol and drug overdose, are the 3rd and 4th leading cause of death for men 45-54. More than 2 drinks a day (1 drink = 12 oz beer, 5 oz wine, 1 ½ oz liquor) may damage your liver, raise your blood pressure, increase your chance of accidents and affect relationships with loved ones.

4. 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
- 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.

Lung cancer- If you have smoked more than 1 pack/day for 30 years and are between age 55 and 79, discuss the option of a low-dose CT scan to try to detect lung cancer earlier

- **Colon cancer-** Colonoscopy at age 50 and every 10 years unless runs in family or have had polyps or change in stools
- **Prostate cancer-** PSA blood test if understand limitations and need for further testing if positive; repeat every 1-2 years
- **Skin cancer-** Wear a hat and sunscreen whenever in the sun; have moles checked that change in size, shape or color

5. Accidents- most are preventable

- Wear your seatbelt (or helmet for bike/motorcycles)
- Keep guns locked up and store ammo separately
- Make sure smoke / carbon monoxide detectors work

6. Chronic Lung Disease

- **Quit smoking.**
- Get treated if you have symptoms (shortness of breath, chronic cough, wheezing)
- Get a yearly flu shot and immunization against pneumonia

7. Plan for (the end of) life

- Have a Living Will and/or Power of Attorney for Health
- Midlife is a good time to think about the bigger issues of life-work and making money are good, but what good are they if you aren't around to enjoy life (now or at retirement)?

Making the Move towards Good Health

Know your health risks

See where you stand- how long do you have?

<https://www.livingto100.com/calculator>

Pick an area to improve

Quit smoking

Lose weight- even 5-10 lbs helps alot

Get more active- walk, move, just do it!

Work up to 30 minutes 5 days a week

Eat better- more fruit, veggies, fiber

Avoid concentrated sweets, limit alcohol

Do something about it

Have a plan- what, when, how

Make little changes you can stick with

Work your plan- start today

Try, try again

Life = interruptions in our plans

Falling isn't failure but not getting up again is

Prevent problems now

Immunizations

Tetanus-pertussis – every 10 years

Flu shot- yearly

Pneumonia vaccine if chronic illness or smoker

Shingles vaccine at age 60

Blood tests

Cholesterol- at least every 5 years

Blood sugar- if overweight or diabetes in family

HIV test- if at risk; Hepatitis C test for baby boomers

Cancer screening

Our Goal... Your Good Health

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

Men 50 to 64

Forum Family Medicine
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