



## MEN'S HEALTH AWARENESS

The purpose of Men's Health Awareness Month is to heighten the awareness of preventable health problems and encourage early detection and treatment of disease among males. Testicular cancer, prostate cancer and cardiovascular disease are three of the most common diseases facing men today. Each can cause death, but all can be treated if caught early. Thus, diligence and understanding are critical in preventing and or curing these disorders.

### Testicular Cancer

Testicular cancer is the most common type of cancer in young men ages 15 to 35. Early detection is critical because testicular cancer typically grows quickly and begins to spread to other parts of the body rapidly after the first symptoms appear. But if treated early, testicular cancer have a very high (>98%) cure rate.

### Risk Factors

There are several factors that increase men's risk of developing testicular cancer:

- Age.
  - Most common in men 15 to 35, but can strike any man at any age.
- Undescended testicle(s), even if they were brought to normal position as a child.
- Family history of testicular cancer.
- Caucasian men are
  - slightly more likely to develop testicular cancer than Hispanics,
  - twice as likely as Asian-Americans,
  - five to ten times more likely than African-Americans.
- Diet.
  - Recent studies show that eating a lot of cheese and other dairy products increases the risk of developing testicular cancer.
  - Luncheon meats and a high red meat/low fruit diet also increase the risk.

### Prostate Cancer

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men and the second leading killer of men behind lung cancer. Prostate cancer generally grows slowly and most men die with prostate cancer rather than from it (meaning that they die of some other cause). Still, prostate cancer kills approximately 30,000 men each year. But detected early, it can be cured.

In the early stages, prostate cancer has no apparent symptoms. However, as the disease progresses, the patient may develop symptoms that are the same as for prostatitis and/or BPH (Benign Prostatic Hypertrophy or "enlarged prostate"). Additional symptoms include:

- Chronic pain in the hips, thighs, or lower back.
- Blood in the urine or semen.

The lack of early symptoms and the overlap of symptoms with non-cancerous conditions make prostate cancer difficult to diagnose. That's why it's essential that you get screened regularly.



## Risk Factors

There are a handful of factors that could put you at risk of developing prostate cancer:

- Age.
  - Risk increases after age 40 in African-American men or men with a family history of prostate cancer.
  - Risk increases after age 50 in white men with no family history of prostate cancer.
  - Disease most often diagnosed in men over the age of 65, but it is becoming more common in men between the ages of 55 and 65.
- Family.
  - Your risk of developing prostate cancer is doubled if your father, brother or close male blood relative has had the disease.
- Race.
  - African-Americans have the highest rate of prostate cancer in the world, at least twice as high as Caucasian males.
- Diet.
  - Eating a diet low in fiber and high in fat and red meat, has been shown to increase prostate cancer risk.

If you don't have any symptoms, prostate cancer is often discovered during a regularly scheduled examination and/or with a PSA blood test (prostate specific antigen), which is often an indicator of prostate-related problems.

*“Prostate cancer can be devastating to an individual, but does not affect men in isolation. It also has, often overlooked, effects on wives, partners, and entire families. We promote regular screenings and early detection of the disease in order to help ensure the best chance of recovery and highest quality of life.”—Theresa Morrow, Prostate Cancer Advocate*

## Cardiovascular Disease

Cardiovascular disease is a blanket term that includes three major types of diseases of the heart and blood vessels:

- Hypertension (high blood pressure)
- Coronary artery disease (CAD)
- Stroke

Over 32 million American men suffer from one or more of these conditions, and every year *approximately 450,000 die of cardiovascular disease*—more than cancer, lung disease, accidents and diabetes combined.

Compared to Caucasian men, African-American men are more likely to die of cardiovascular disease and Latino men are less likely.

*“The genders are taught to deal with fear and pain differently. When a boy is eight years old and he skins his knee, he is told brave boys don't cry. When he is a teenager playing high school*



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*football and gets hurt, they tell him to take it for the team. So when he is 50 years old and having chest pain, he'll say it's just indigestion.”—Jean Bonhomme, MD,*

### **Risk Factors**

There are a number of factors that contribute to your likelihood of developing some kind of cardiovascular disease.

You are at increased risk if you:

- Have an immediate family member diagnosed with hypertension or some other kind of heart condition before age 55.
- Are African-American.
- Have a sedentary life style (little or no exercise).
- Are obese.
- Eat a diet high in salt.
- Have high cholesterol or low HDL
- Smoke or chew tobacco—smokers are 2-4 times more likely to develop heart disease than a nonsmoker.
- Have high blood pressure.
- Are under a lot of stress regularly.
- Have more than two alcoholic drinks every day.
- Drink a lot of coffee (not decaf).
- Have diabetes—studies have shown that 80 percent of people with diabetes die of some type of cardiovascular disease.
- Are taking medication that affects blood pressure.
- Are 45 or older.

Additional information on diseases that impact men and boys is available from these resources:

#### **Men's Health Library**

[www.menshealthlibrary.org](http://www.menshealthlibrary.org)

#### **American Urological Association (AUA)**

[www.auanet.org](http://www.auanet.org)

#### **National Cancer Institute (NCI)**

[www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov)

#### **American Heart Association (AHA)**

[www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org)

#### **National Institutes of Health (NIH)**

[www.nih.gov](http://www.nih.gov)

#### **Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC)**

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)