



Men's Health Month

June is Men's Health Month, a good reminder of the ways men are uniquely challenged as well as equipped to manage common health issues. It's not just about issues that affect only men, such as prostate health, or even about those that are more common in men than women, like early onset heart disease, Parkinson's, and lung cancer. It's about the fact that a lot of men simply don't go to the doctor at all.

Men, for reasons that are probably more cultural than biological, are far less likely than women to seek medical care when a problem arises. A study published in BMJ Open found that men are about 32 percent less likely than women to visit the doctor, often letting symptoms escalate before scheduling an appointment. According to a Cleveland Clinic survey, 65 percent of men admit they put off seeing a doctor as long as they can, waiting until symptoms become severe. And 72 percent say they would rather do household chores, like cleaning the bathroom, than go to the doctor!

If that resonates for you or a man in your life, you're in the majority. It's easy to joke about choosing lawn mowing over a check-up, but that instinct to put off care is often what creates the biggest risks as we get older. By making a small but proactive shift from waiting for symptoms to appear to checking in on your health on the regular, we can think about 'health maintenance' not as another chore on your to-do list, but as a strategy for staying sharp and strong. By following recommended primary care visits and screenings, we don't just prevent problems; we actively build the blueprint for the next decade of life.

Preventive care isn't one-size-fits-all, but there are milestones that help catch things early. These are general guidelines for average-risk men, and your personal plan may be different if you have chronic conditions or strong family history.

In your 20s and 30s

Establish a baseline. Get your blood pressure checked at routine visits and a cholesterol panel so you know your numbers. If you carry extra weight or have other risk factors, blood sugar screening for diabetes starts at 35. Get a one-time hepatitis C test and at least one HIV test, both standard now and easy to forget. Repeat based on your risk and your doctor's advice. And log your family health history and pay attention to mental health, which men report and treat far less often than women.

In your 40s

Step up the monitoring. Colorectal cancer screening now starts at 45, not 50, because cases in younger adults have been rising, so a colonoscopy or an at-home stool test belongs on the calendar. Blood sugar and cholesterol checks become more important as cardiovascular risk climbs. This is a good decade to start talking with your doctor about prostate cancer risk and whether early PSA testing makes sense, especially if you are Black or have a family history.

50 and beyond

Stay on top of the major screenings. Colorectal testing continues through 75. The window for deciding about PSA testing for prostate cancer is 55 to 69, and it is a decision you make with your doctor, not an automatic yes or no. Blood pressure and cholesterol stay front and center as heart disease becomes the leading threat. If you smoke now or quit within the last 15 years and have at least a 20 pack-year history, you may qualify for annual lung cancer screening from 50 to 80. If you have ever smoked, ask whether a one-time ultrasound to check for an abdominal aortic aneurysm between 65 and 75 is right for you.

It might help to think of these not as "doctor's orders," but as high-level data collection for your own personal longevity strategy. The men who get checked are the ones who catch problems while they are still small giving themselves the best odds of staying strong and present for the people they love and who love them. An hour at the doctor now is a small trade for the years it helps protect.

Smoky Three-Bean Chili



This low-hands-on chili relies entirely on beans and vegetables, so it is loaded with the fiber many men fall short on (the average man eats around 18 grams a day, while they should be getting around 35 grams). It's meal prep friendly and freezes well, so a single Sunday pot can cover several weeknights.

Ingredients (serves 6):

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large onion, diced
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 to 2 chipotle peppers in adobo, minced, plus 1 teaspoon of the sauce
- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 can (28 oz) crushed tomatoes
- 1 can (15 oz) black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 can (15 oz) pinto beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 can (15 oz) kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 1.5 cups vegetable broth
- 1 cup corn, fresh or frozen
- Salt to taste
- Toppings: diced avocado, cilantro, lime, pumpkin seeds.

Instructions:

1. Heat the oil in a large pot over medium heat and cook the onion and bell pepper until soft, about 6 to 7 minutes. Add the garlic and cook for another minute.
2. Stir in the chili powder, cumin, smoked paprika, oregano, and chipotle, and cook until fragrant, about a minute.
3. Add the crushed tomatoes, all three beans, the broth, and the corn, and bring to a simmer.
4. Simmer uncovered, stirring now and then, until it thickens, 30 to 40 minutes. Season with salt.
5. Serve with avocado, cilantro, lime, and a handful of pumpkin seeds.