

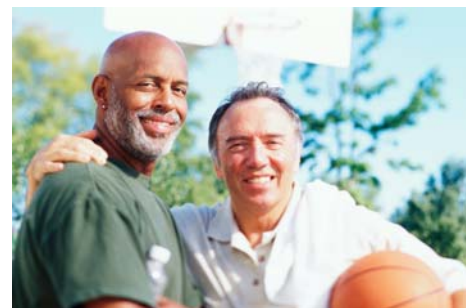
Health Awareness

A County Health Pool Publication



June 2004

National Men's Health Week is June 14-20



Each year, the week before Father's Day is celebrated as National Men's Health Week. The goal of Men's Health Week is to raise awareness about health issues that affect men and their families.

Men's life expectancy is seven years shorter than women's. Although there may be some genetic reasons for their lower life expectancy, men tend to have different habits than women that increase the wear on their bodies. Men generally drink and smoke more, receive less frequent medical care, and have more stress. For American men, the ten leading causes of death are: heart disease, cancer, stroke, accidents, lung disease, pneumonia, diabetes, suicide, liver disease and homicide.

Prevention

There are a variety of preventative actions that you as a man can take to improve your overall health and reduce your risk for diseases. You should watch your diet, exercise regularly, practice stress management, eliminate risky behaviors, and get routine physical exams and screenings.

Eat a Balanced Diet

Heart disease, cancer, stroke, diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and obesity are all related to a poor diet. Most American men consume too much fat, sugar and overall calories.

Health professionals recommend eating a balanced diet with plenty of fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains and legumes and limiting consumption of highly processed foods.

Exercise Regularly

Exercise programs can help you to control your weight, reduce stress, increase energy, improve self-esteem, reduce pain and injuries, and improve sleep. Experts recommend thirty minutes of daily moderate physical exercise. Find physical activities that you enjoy—such as walking the dog or playing basketball—to stay in shape and feel good.

Reduce Stress


Chronic stress is a risk factor in many of the major diseases affecting men. Prolonged stress has been linked to sleep disorders, ulcers, addictions, anxiety and depression.

Protect your mental and physical health by engaging in activities that help you to manage stress at home and at work.

Eliminate Risky Behaviors

Think about safety and protecting yourself. Fasten your seatbelt, wear sunscreen, wear your bike helmet, and install smoke detectors in your home. If you smoke, quit. Smoking triples your risk of dying from a heart attack if you are middle aged. Alcohol consumption should be limited.

Get Routine Physical Exams

Routine exams and screenings can help save lives. When problems are detected early, your chances for successful treatment are better. Depending on your age and lifestyle, your doctor may recommend tests for certain diseases and conditions. Common tests include blood tests to screen for diabetes, high cholesterol, prostate cancer, infections or HIV; a digital rectal exam to detect enlargement of the prostate; urine tests to detect infections, kidney ailments or diabetes; or an electrocardiogram to check your heart. 

June is National Aphasia Awareness Month



Aphasia is more common than Parkinson's Disease, cerebral palsy or muscular dystrophy, but many people have never heard of aphasia. Each June, the National Aphasia Association sponsors National Aphasia Awareness Month to raise the public's awareness about aphasia.

What is Aphasia?

Aphasia is a language impairment which affects a person's ability to produce or comprehend speech and, in some cases, the ability to read or write. Aphasia, however, does not affect intelligence.

Aphasia is caused by brain injuries—most commonly from strokes—but may also arise from head trauma, brain tumors, or infections. Although people with aphasia are physically able to read, write, and talk, the area of the brain that processes language doesn't



work correctly. Aphasia can range from mild (for example, an individual may have difficulty retrieving the names of some objects), to severe where communication with the impaired individual is almost impossible.

Who Is At Risk for Aphasia?

Although aphasia patients tend to be elderly, aphasia can occur in people of any age, race, sex or nationality. Experts estimate that approximately one million people in the United States have acquired aphasia.

About forty percent of all stroke patients have some form of aphasia. Approximately one third of all people with severe head injuries have aphasia.

Is Aphasia Permanent?

Aphasia may be temporary. More than half of all people who show symptoms of aphasia completely recover within a few days. This form of aphasia is called transient aphasia. The most dramatic improvements occur in the first few days or weeks after a stroke when there is rapid healing in the brain.

After the first few months, the window for rapid recovery is over, but patients can continue to improve slowly with proper treatment.

Can Aphasia be Cured?

For most patients, speech therapy is a key part of the patient's recovery, but it does not guarantee a cure. Speech therapy is designed to help the patient to communicate utilizing his or her remaining skills.

Surgery may help some patients whose aphasia is caused by pressure in the brain. Also, researchers are

Family Support

Families can help aphasia patients by reaching out to them. The National Aphasia Association provides the following tips for improving communication with an aphasia patient:

- Keep communication simple, but not childish. Use short, concise sentences, but don't talk down to the patient.
- Play to their strengths. If he or she can read and write, but not speak, try communicating through notes and gestures.
- Get their attention. Limit distracting background noises, like radio or TV.
- Be supportive. Praise them whenever and however they communicate.
- Be patient. Give them extra time to communicate. Try not to finish their sentences.
- Continue regular activities. Aphasia patients don't need to stay at home. Take them out to visit friends and family.
- Stay informed. Learn all you can about your loved one's condition. You may want to join a support group.

testing new drugs that stimulate blood flow to the brain in hopes of improving language skills in aphasia patients.

To learn more about aphasia, visit the National Aphasia Association's website at www.aphasia.org. 