

# Public Health, Epidemiology and Prevention

# PEP Talk

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## Men's Health Week is June 12-18, 2006

Men's Health Week is celebrated each year as the week leading up to and including Father's Day. The purpose of Men's Health Week is to heighten the awareness of preventable health problems and to encourage early detection and treatment of disease among men and boys.

According to the Men's Health Network, men die at higher rates than women from the top causes of death - heart disease, cancer, stroke, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, accidents, pneumonia and influenza, diabetes, suicide, kidney disease, and chronic liver disease and cirrhosis. And while heart disease is the leading killer of both men and women, almost twice as many males die of conditions that affect the cardiovascular system. According to the American Heart Association, risk factors for heart disease in men include:

- ⇒ Increasing age
- ⇒ Smoking
- ⇒ High blood cholesterol
- ⇒ High blood pressure
- ⇒ Physical inactivity
- ⇒ Obesity & overweight
- ⇒ Diabetes

Family history and race. Those with family history of the disease have greater risk. So do African-Americans, Mexican Americans, Native Americans, Native Hawaiians, and some Asian Americans.

Some things, such as your age and sex, obviously

cannot be controlled, but modifying your lifestyle to eat right and exercise can reduce your risk of heart disease

Lung cancer is the leading cancer killer of both men and women, claiming more lives than prostate, colon, and breast cancer combined. Tobacco products are responsible for 90% of lung cancer. Quitting smoking now greatly reduces your risk of lung cancer.

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer found in men. It's the second leading type of cancer death in men, after lung cancer. Yet the disease is treatable if found in early stages. This can be a challenge, since prostate cancer can show no symptoms until it has spread to other parts of the body. The American Cancer Society recommends an annual digital rectal exam and a prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test for healthy men 50 years or older.

Men who have family history of prostate cancer or who are African-American may want to ask their doctor about earlier testing.

Stroke is the third leading killer in the country, after heart disease and all forms of cancer. The incidence rate of stroke is greater in men than in women, although there is really no difference between the sexes as people get older, according to the American Stroke Association. In many ways, behaviors that can reduce the risk of stroke mirror those that can reduce risk of heart disease.



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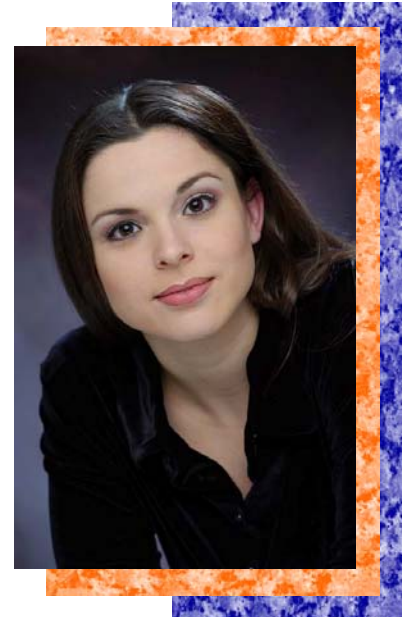
Men are four times more likely to commit suicide compared to women, reports the Mens Health Network, which attributes part of the blame on under-diagnosed depression in men. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, more than 6 million men have depression each year. Experts believe the number of males with depression could be even greater since men may show signs of depression in a manner different from many women. Instead of sadness, experts say, depression may play out in the following ways in men:

- ⇒ Aggression
- ⇒ Risk-taking behavior
- ⇒ Alcohol and substance abuse
- ⇒ Work "burnout"
- ⇒ Midlife crisis
- ⇒ Anger

Many diseases and health conditions can be prevented by reducing risk factors. Be aware, and do your part to live a healthier lifestyle.

For information about a June 15 event featuring Vivia Font, call our Men's Health Services program at (727) 462-MALE (6253). Vivia's expertise extends to all issues related to the physical and emotional health of men and their families, including the role of women in men's health.

For men's health information and services, call us or visit [menshealthnetwork.org](http://menshealthnetwork.org)



*Vivia Font  
Men's Health Expert*

## **Hands-On Home Safety: June is Home Safety Month**

Ask people where they feel safest and most will say they feel safest in their own homes. However, unintentional injuries in the home result in an average of 21 million medical visits each year. In fact, more than 2,000 children die each year in the place parents want them to feel safest, their home. This year's Home Safety Month Theme – ***Hands-On Home Safety*** – encourages individuals to take some simple, "hands-on" steps to create a safer home environment.

The leading preventable home injuries include falls, poisonings, fires and burns. Consider your home's danger areas and take some simple steps to minimize the risk from potential injuries, or even death.

- **Fires/Burns**
- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home and in or near all bedrooms. Test the batteries once a month so you'll know they're working. Sadly, the destruction caused by many fires in homes could have been prevented if the smoke detectors in those homes had working batteries.
- Plan a home fire drill and practice it at least twice a year. Make sure everyone in the family knows at least two ways to exit the home.
- For homes with young children, use safety covers in electrical outlets and anti-scald devices in faucets.

### **Falls**

- Make sure that all porches, hallways and stairwells are well lit. Use the maximum safe wattage in light fixtures. Maximum safe wattage is usually posted on a sticker inside light fixtures.
- Use a non-slip mat, strips or decals in bathtubs and showers.
- Install grab bars in bath and shower stalls.

### **Poisonings**

- Keep all medicine and household chemicals and cleaners up high and out of reach of children, preferably in a locked cabinet.
- Install a carbon monoxide detector near sleeping areas in your home.
- Put the poison control center number (1-800-222-1222) near every phone.

To learn more about making your home a safe place for everyone in your family, visit the Home Safety Resource Center at [www.homesafetycouncil.org](http://www.homesafetycouncil.org).



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