

Men's Health

Heart disease, hypertension and cholesterol



Hypertension

One in five people (males and females) have high blood pressure (around 10 million in the UK). One of the big issues with high blood pressure is that it does not cause any symptoms but can lead to very serious complications such as strokes, heart attacks, atherosclerosis (narrowing of the arteries), kidney issues and eye damage.

Thankfully many lifestyle choices can reduce risk: Exercise (minimum of 20 minutes per session, 3 times per week which causes some breathlessness), not smoking, keeping your BMI below 25, avoid salt in your diet, reduce your stress levels and reduce your intake of alcohol.

Cholesterol

Cholesterol is one of the body's fats (lipids). Cholesterol and another lipid, triglyceride, are important building blocks in the structure of cells and are also used in making hormones and producing energy. Having too much cholesterol in the blood itself is not a disease but can lead to hardening and narrowing of the arteries (atherosclerosis) in the major vascular systems.

Again, many lifestyle factors can help with this including; not smoking, a Mediterranean diet rich in grains, fruits, vegetables, fish and olive oil, moderating alcohol, maintaining a healthy weight and exercising regularly.

Heart disease

A man's risk of heart disease starts to increase at the age of 45. However, taking the following steps can reduce your risk of heart disease:

- Don't smoke or use other tobacco products
- Get your blood pressure checked at least every two years
- Get your cholesterol tested
- Eat a heart-healthy diet. Eat plenty of fresh fruits, vegetables, and foods that are high in fibre. Limit foods high in saturated fat, cholesterol, trans fat, and sodium
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Limit alcohol use
- Take regular exercise
- Control diabetes, if you have it



Men's Health

Prostate and testicular cancer



Prostate cancer

Prostate cancer is a disease that affects men from around the age of 45 years. It involves the prostate gland that sits just below the bladder and is the size of a walnut. As the urethra (the tube that carries or takes urine from the bladder) passes through the centre of the prostate gland any growth can often make urination difficult.

The disease is the most common male cancer in the UK with around 32,000 diagnosed each year so therefore needs to be taken very seriously.

The following are known risk factors for prostate cancer:

- **Age** – Being 50 years of age or older
- **Family history** – Having a father, brother or son who had prostate cancer increases your risk (and a family history of breast or ovarian cancer may also increase your risk)
- **Race** – Being African Caribbean
- **Genes** – Having certain genes can raise your risk

Is screening right for you?

It is important to talk to your Doctor about any changes in urinary function or pains in the hips, pelvis or lower back area. Your Doctor can explain the different tests and review your personal medical history to decide on any further action that may be required.

Testicular cancer

Testicular cancer is a disease in which cancerous cells develop in one or both testicles. The testicles are the male reproductive organs. They make and store sperm and are the main source of the hormone testosterone in men.

Testicular cancer is rare overall, but it is the most common cancer in men ages 15 to 35. It is also one of the most curable forms of cancer.

Frequent self-examination can make you become more aware of what's normal for you, so you will notice if something is different.

If you are concerned that you have a lump or pain in your testicles, it's best to get it checked out, as it may reassure you. There are many reasons why lumps could have formed and most are not testicular cancer. But it's always best to have a check-up as early detection of problems can save lives.

Some risk factors for testicular cancer include:

- Having an undescended testicle – a testicle that did not drop down from inside the abdomen before birth
- Having testicles that form in an abnormal way
- Being Caucasian
- Having a personal or family history of testicular cancer