

Chronic Disease Prevention Bulletin

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The Silent Health Crisis

Some men needlessly suffer from heart disease, cancer and diabetes. Many are private about their health and do not like to discuss their lifestyle or health problems with anyone, including their healthcare provider, wife, brother, sister or friend. Men with chronic diseases may have one or more of the classic risk factors, i.e., overweight, poor eating habits, physical inactivity, and smoking. As a result, many men are dying too soon – a silent health crisis.

A 53-year-old divorced white man suffered from heart disease: hypertension, high LDL cholesterol and low HDL cholesterol. He was overweight, consumed fast foods frequently, exercised rarely, smoked occasionally and was depressed. He did not discuss his health with anyone and went to the doctor when he absolutely had to go. Needless to say, he had heart surgery and died of complications.

A 58-year-old black man smoked, drank alcohol and ate few fruits and vegetables. He traveled the world several times and accomplished much in his career. He received high honors and medals from the US military. Yet, a retired veteran who was proud and fearless was very private and did not talk about his health. He did not get regular health exams, such as blood pressure, cholesterol and glucose checks and colonoscopy and prostate exams. This proud and fearless man died of colon cancer that may have been prevented or treated.

What is similar in these two men? Both had unhealthy lifestyles and chronic diseases that were either preventable and/or treatable. However, what caused them to die at an early age was their silence. Silence in discussing their health and lifestyle with their healthcare providers, family or friends; silence in finding ways to prevent or treat chronic diseases; and silence in taking action is what robbed these men and many like them of good health and longevity of life.

Break the Silence!

American men live sicker and die younger than American women – Dr. David Gremillion from Men's Health Network, www.menshealthnetwork.org.

- Men die 5.4 years sooner than women
- Men have a higher death rate for many of the leading causes of deaths in Georgia
- Men are more likely than women to die of heart disease and cancer.

Georgia Health Statistics, 2004

Diseases	Men	Women
Cardiovascular Disease	388.9	277.1
Cancer	252.1	160.4
Stroke	61.4	58.6
Diabetes	26.0	20.0
HIV/AIDS	9.2	2.2

Data Source: Age Adjusted Death Rates for All Races and Ages
<http://oasis.state.ga.us>

Take Action

- **Get Checked!** Start talking about your health. Talk to your health care provider. Get regular check-ups (see the chart on the reverse side). Talk to a relative or friend about your results. Be accountable for your actions.
- Join a support group at work, place of worship, health or community center.
- **Be Active!** Start a physical activity program suitable for you.
- **Eat Healthy!** Eat 5-9 fruits and vegetables a day and consume a variety.
- **Be Smoke Free!** Call the Georgia Tobacco Quit Line: 1-877-270-STOP or sign up for a smoking cessation class.
- Monitor your progress! It is not easy to make lifestyle changes but you can do it with small milestones and little rewards.
- **Be Positive!** People who ask about your health or who try to motivate you to eat healthy or to exercise are not your enemies or your personal nagger. Think of them as your **free** personal advisor/trainer!

BREAK THE SILENCE, TAKE ACTION AND LIVE A LONG AND HEALTHIER LIFE!



Celebrate Men's Health Week June 12-18, 2006

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GET CHECKED (MEN)

Getting regular check-ups and preventive screening tests are among the most important things you can do for yourself. Take time to review these guidelines for screening tests. Use the charts below to remind yourself of when you need to see your healthcare provider based on your personal health profile. Make an appointment today! Then, become a partner with your healthcare provider to decide when you need your screenings. Share your family history, speak up, voice your concerns, and always ask questions. For instance, if your healthcare provider asks you to increase the amount you exercise, ask for examples of exercises that are best for you. If you are wondering if you need certain screenings, ask your healthcare provider. This chart lists recommended screenings for men at average risk for most diseases. These are guidelines only. Your healthcare provider will personalize the timing of each test to best meet your healthcare needs.

Screening Tests	Ages 18-39	Ages 40-49	Ages 50-64	Ages 65+
Full check-up, including weight and height	Discuss with your health care provider.	Discuss with your health care provider.	Discuss with your health care provider.	Discuss with your health care provider.
Blood pressure test	Starting at age 21, then once every 1-2 years if normal	Every 1-2 years	Every 1-2 years	Every 1-2 years
Cholesterol test	Starting at age 35, then every 5 years	Every 5 years	Every 5 years	Every 5 years
Blood sugar test	Discuss with your health care provider.	Starting at age 45, then every 3 years	Every 3 years	Every 3 years
Digital Rectal Exam (DRE)		Discuss with your provider whether prostate cancer screening is right for you.	Discuss with your provider whether prostate cancer screening is right for you.	Discuss with your provider whether prostate cancer screening is right for you.
Prostate-Specific Antigen (PSA) (blood test)		Discuss with your provider whether prostate cancer screening is right for you.	Discuss with your provider whether prostate cancer screening is right for you.	Discuss with your provider whether prostate cancer screening is right for you.
For colorectal screening, you need to have <u>one</u> of the following tests:				
Fecal occult blood test			Yearly	Yearly
Flexible Sigmoidoscopy (with annual fecal occult blood test is preferred)			Every 5 years	Every 5 years
Double Contrast Barium Enema (DCBE)			Every 5-10 years (if not having colonoscopy or sigmoidoscopy)	Every 5-10 years (if not having colonoscopy or sigmoidoscopy)
Colonoscopy			Every 10 years	Every 10 years

HIV is another illness that affects Men's Health. National HIV Test Day is on June 27, 2006. If you do not know your HIV status – **Get Checked! Get Tested!** Contact your local health department or health care provider for your confidential HIV Test.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



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