

# Health expert shares some of the top health concerns men face

March 4 2015, by Evie Polsley

---

Men lead women in the likelihood to die from nearly all the most common causes of death. Still, men are less likely to go to the doctor than women and often try to ignore symptoms of health problems.

"A lot of men think going to the doctor is just one more thing on a seemingly endless 'to do' list. But to get all those other 'to dos' done men need to start thinking about their health and making it a priority," said Kevin Polsley, MD, [primary care physician](#) at Loyola University Health System and assistant professor in the Department of Medicine at Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine.

Here are the top five health concerns for men and some tips on how to prevent them.

**Heart disease:** Men have a higher risk of heart attacks than women and these risks increase when there is [family history](#) of the disease. Heart disease risks also increase if a man smokes, has [high cholesterol](#), [high blood pressure](#) or diabetes.

"Exercise and diet are extremely important in preventing heart attacks. Routine preventive care appointments with a primary care physician also can help identify most of these risk factors, and modification and treatment of these risk factors can help decrease the risk as well," said Polsley.

**Sleep Apnea:** It is estimated that 18 million Americans have sleep apnea

but many aren't tested for it. Subtle symptoms include snoring, waking up frequently in the night to urinate, headaches in the morning or waking up with a dry mouth.

"Sleep is extremely important for our bodies. When we don't get enough sleep our bodies and our minds suffer. Many men's health issues can be helped if they take steps to manage their sleep apnea. Long-term complications from the disease include high blood pressure, heart failure, heart attacks and stroke, so it's an important condition to diagnose and treat," said Polsley.

Weight loss can help decrease this problem. Polsley recommends a sleep test to determine the cause of the [sleep apnea](#) and the best treatment.

**High blood pressure:** Family history and obesity are two of the leading causes of high blood pressure.

"Whether you have a family history of high blood pressure or not, [weight loss](#) can decrease the risk of developing the disease. A low-sodium diet also can help when battling high [blood pressure](#). Many people think that means just avoiding salt, but it's more than that; it's a lifestyle. Talk to your doctor about what is best for you," said Polsley.

**High cholesterol:** High cholesterol also has a strong genetic component. Still, a man can have high cholesterol even if there is no family history. Diet and exercise are key to preventing this disease.

"Diet and exercise are the best way to help prevent high cholesterol. If you have a family history or are concerned, eating fish or taking a fish oil supplement also have been shown to help prevent high cholesterol. Talk to your doctor," said Polsley.

**Colon cancer:** Statistics show that men are more likely than women to

be diagnosed with colon cancer. Early detection is important for battling colon cancer so a colonoscopy should be done every 10 years after the age of 50 or earlier if there is a family history.

"If caught early, the prognosis for [colon cancer](#) is good. That is why everyone, [men](#) and women, should have routine colonoscopies. They may not be pleasant, but they can save your life," said Polsley.

Provided by Loyola University Health System

Citation: Health expert shares some of the top health concerns men face (2015, March 4)  
retrieved 20 March 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-03-health-expert-men.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--