

Doctors drive 3,000 miles to state conversation on male body image

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Jamin Brahmbhatt, M.D., and Sijo Parekattil, M.D., examine the label of a supplement bottle. They say most people can get the vitamins and nutrients that they need from food and that taking supplements can have unintended health effects if used without supervision. Credit: Orlando Health

Even though men don't often talk about their body insecurities, a new survey finds it's something that's certainly on their minds. Instead of discussing the issue or seeking advice from their doctors, men often turn

to supplements and extreme workout regimens to change their bodies. A national survey commissioned by Orlando Health finds that 90 percent of men have changed their daily habits to reach their fitness goals. While it's common and healthy to adopt some lifestyle changes, millennials are much more likely than any age group to go to extremes, like using supplements (51 percent) and working out more than four days per week (56 percent).

With health food store shelves lined with pills and powders promising to build muscle and cut fat, doctors warn that supplements are not regulated by the FDA and could have unintended health consequences. And while gym culture encourages men to push themselves to their limits, intense workout schedules often lead to burnout and an unhealthy rise and fall in weight and muscles mass.

To help men find a safe and sustainable balance, Dr. Jamin Brahmbhatt and Dr. Sijo Parekattil, co-directors of the PUR (Personalized Urology & Robotics) Clinic and urologists at Orlando Health, are hitting the road for the 5th annual Drive for Men's Health. This year, they'll open a conversation about male body image and discuss the possible dangers of going overboard for the sake of obtaining 6-pack abs or bigger muscles.

"Finding that healthy balance can be a challenge, but it's something that men should be speaking to their doctors about. The daily habits that they think are improving their health could actually be putting it at risk," said Brahmbhatt. "A lot of claims on the labels of supplements and shakes are, at best, unresearched, and at worst, potentially dangerous."



Damien Taglione says he tries to get the nutrients his body needs from whole foods rather than supplements. A new survey by Orlando Health found that millennials are more likely to use supplements than any other age group, something doctors warn could have hidden dangers. Credit: Orlando Health

On June 4th, Brahmhatt and Parekattil will kick-off this year's event in New York City, then hit the road in the Drive for Men's Health hybrid BMW i8 for a 3,000 mile road trip. They'll make stops in Philadelphia, Columbus, Chicago and Houston before ending their journey with a grand finale event in Clermont, Florida.

The duo will host health and nutrition demonstrations in partnership with local chefs at farmers' markets in each city, inviting men to take control of their health and be a part of the conversation on body image issues for men. They'll finish their roadtrip by joining the Clermont Waterfront ParkRun for a 5K to celebrate optimal health and active lifestyles.

"We want people to have fun at these events so that they are engaged and can absorb the important health messages that we're putting out there," said Parekattil, "Showing up creates a great opportunity to start the conversation and make an appointment with your doctor, because just living a healthy lifestyle isn't enough. Having regular visits with a physician is also extremely important to disease prevention and maintaining good health."

If you can't make it to the live events, you can ride along with the doctors via social media using the hashtag #Drive4Men. They'll be using Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube to answer questions, give live health advice and provide updates along their journey.

Twitter and Instagram: @drive4men

Facebook: www.facebook.com/drive4men

YouTube: www.youtube.com/channel/UCCuMJnIBrmgU9hoZeU2h-og

Not only are millennials more likely to engage in risky habits to achieve their body goals, but they're also less likely to see their doctors.

Brahmbhatt and Parekattil are determined to reach as many men as possible to help them understand the importance of regular checkups and encourage each of them to make an appointment.

"We often use the analogy that our bodies are a lot like our cars," said Brahmbhatt. "Men will take the time to do preventative maintenance on their cars, like getting tune ups and oil changes, but for whatever reason, we often don't take the same time and effort for our [health](#). We need to

change that mindset."

Brahmbhatt and Parekattil will hold events from June 4 through June 9 to spread the message that you don't need to go to extremes for the perfect body, but just like your car, regular maintenance will keep it in proper working order.

Provided by Orlando Health

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