

# WHAT MEN *SHOULD KNOW* ABOUT THEIR HEALTH

## -- SIX COMMON CONDITIONS MEN SHOULD DISCUSS WITH THEIR PHYSICIANS, ESPECIALLY AS THEY AGE --

Men continue to struggle to manage many health concerns and heart disease, cancer, stroke and diabetes are among the leading causes of death in men over 40.<sup>1</sup> Below are critical facts and information about some of the leading health conditions facing men today.

### DIABETES

#### Facts:

- An estimated 10.9 million adult men age 20 years or older in the U.S. have diabetes. Yet, almost one third of them do not know it.<sup>2</sup>
- More than 60 percent of non-traumatic lower-limb amputations that occur in the U.S. are performed on people with diabetes.<sup>3</sup> Amputation rates are higher in men than in women with diabetes.<sup>3</sup>
- Low testosterone may increase the risk for obesity and low muscle mass, which can exacerbate the symptoms and complications of diabetes.<sup>4</sup>

#### What Men Need to Know:

- Diabetes can lead to serious complications such as heart disease, stroke, blindness, kidney disease and amputation.<sup>3</sup>
- Glucose and Hemoglobin A1c tests can detect diabetes and pre-diabetes.<sup>5</sup> Men aged 50 to 64 with risk factors for diabetes should be screened at least every three years.<sup>6</sup>
- Men with diabetes can help manage their disease through diet, exercise and prescription treatments, as directed by a physician.<sup>7</sup>

### HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

#### Facts:

- Approximately 50 million men and women in the U.S. have high blood pressure and about 30 percent of them do not know it.<sup>8</sup>
- High blood pressure, when not found or treated, can cause a heart attack, stroke, kidney failure and blindness.<sup>9</sup>

#### What Men Need to Know:

- Blood pressure readings below 120/80 mmHg are generally considered normal and levels of 140/90 mmHg or higher are generally considered high.<sup>9</sup>
- Using a blood pressure cuff and stethoscope, a doctor or nurse can easily tell if a man's blood pressure is high.<sup>10</sup> Men aged 50 to 64 should be screened every one or two years.<sup>11</sup>
- Lifestyle modifications leading to weight loss may lower blood pressure, thereby decreasing risk for heart attack and stroke.<sup>12</sup>

### HIGH CHOLESTEROL

#### Facts:

- About 34.5 million adults in the U.S. have high cholesterol<sup>13</sup> and men over 45 are at higher risk of developing high cholesterol.<sup>14</sup>

- High cholesterol is a major risk factor for coronary heart disease and stroke.<sup>15</sup>

### **What Men Need to Know:**

- Cholesterol levels tend to increase with age and acceptable total cholesterol levels can vary according to the ratio of bad cholesterol (LDLs) to good cholesterol (HDLs). In general, men should maintain total cholesterol levels below the recommended 200mg/dL.<sup>16</sup>
- Cholesterol numbers are best measured by a blood test taken by a physician.<sup>17</sup> The physician will interpret cholesterol numbers based on risk factors including age, gender, family history, race, smoking, high blood pressure, physical inactivity, obesity and diabetes.<sup>15</sup>
- Lifestyle modifications - like exercising to increase good cholesterol levels (HDLs) and/or taking cholesterol lowering medication can be effective in treating high cholesterol.<sup>18</sup>

## **LOW TESTOSTERONE**

### **Facts:**

- Low testosterone affects approximately 4 to 5 million American men. However, it is estimated that only 5 percent of affected men currently receive testosterone replacement therapy.<sup>19</sup>
- Throughout adult life, testosterone helps maintain sex drive, fertility, male hair patterns, muscle mass and bone mass.<sup>20</sup>
- Men's ability to produce testosterone declines as they age.<sup>20</sup> Some men may have a prolonged and significant decrease in testosterone production.<sup>20</sup>

### **What Men Need to Know:**

- The normal range for total testosterone in men is generally 300 to 1,000 nanograms per deciliter (ng/dL), depending on the lab performing the test and the methodology used.<sup>21</sup>
- Typical symptoms of low testosterone include:
  - Increased irritability or depression
  - Fatigue
  - Inability to concentrate
  - Reduced muscle mass and strength
  - Low sex drive and erectile dysfunction (ED)
  - Decreased bone density or osteoporosis<sup>22</sup>
  - Increased body fat<sup>23</sup>
- A simple blood test conducted by a physician can determine if a man has low testosterone.<sup>22</sup>
- The good news is, there are several FDA-approved testosterone replacement therapies that, as directed by a physician, can help treat low testosterone and its symptoms.<sup>22</sup>

## **OSTEOPOROSIS**

### **Facts:**

- In the U.S., it is estimated that over two million men have osteoporosis<sup>24</sup> and approximately 12 million men have low bone mass<sup>24</sup>, putting them at higher risk for developing osteoporosis later in life.<sup>24</sup> It is expected that by 2020, over 20 million men will have low bone mass and osteoporosis.<sup>24</sup>
- Because bone loss occurs without symptoms, osteoporosis is often called a "silent disease."<sup>25</sup>
- There are several factors that can place men at a higher risk for developing osteoporosis including aging, a history of nontraumatic fractures, and low testosterone.<sup>26</sup>

### **What Men Need to Know:**

- One in four men over age 50 will have an osteoporosis-related fracture in their lifetime<sup>25</sup> and mortality after a hip fracture is disproportionately higher in men than in women.<sup>25</sup>

- A Bone Mineral Density Test (BMD Test) conducted by a physician can detect osteoporosis.<sup>25</sup>
- Osteoporosis in men can be treated/prevented by maintaining a balanced diet - including an adequate intake of calcium (1,000-1,500 mg per day, pending age) and vitamin D (400-800 International Units per day) - and exercising regularly.<sup>27</sup> The treating physician may also recommend prescription treatments, such as bisphosphonates.<sup>27</sup>

## PROSTATE HEALTH

### Facts:

- One in six men in the U.S. will develop prostate cancer in the course of his lifetime.<sup>28</sup> In fact, prostate cancer accounts for over 30,000 deaths a year.<sup>11</sup>
- More than 50 percent of men in their sixties and as many as 90 percent in their seventies and eighties have some symptoms of an enlarged prostate.<sup>29</sup>
- Common symptoms of an enlarged prostate involve changes or problems with urination, such as a hesitant, interrupted or weak stream; urgency and leaking or dribbling; and more frequent urination, especially at night.<sup>29</sup>

### What Men Need to Know:

- Prostate cancer is often curable if detected and treated early, but detection can be challenging, as the disease can have few discernible symptoms in the early stages.<sup>30</sup>
- At age 50, both the prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood test and digital rectal examination (DRE) should be conducted annually.<sup>31</sup>
- There are several treatment options for prostate cancer including surgery, radiation and brachy therapy, hormone deprivation therapy, chemotherapy, dietary changes and the use of herbal supplements.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "The top 10 leading causes of death in men over 40." 2005. Remaining Healthy.

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<sup>2</sup> "Total Prevalence of Diabetes & Pre-diabetes." American Diabetes Association. <http://www.diabetes.org/diabetes-statistics/prevalence.jsp>.

<sup>3</sup> "Complications of Diabetes in the United States." American Diabetes Association. <http://www.diabetes.org/diabetes-statistics/complications.jsp>.

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<sup>4</sup> "Low Testosterone Levels in Diabetic Men Suggests New Research." Nutrition Focus.

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<sup>6</sup> "Diabetes." U.S. National Library of Health and the National Institute of Health. February 2005.

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<sup>7</sup> "How to Prevent or Delay Diabetes." American Diabetes Association. <http://www.diabetes.org/diabetes-prevention/how-to-prevent-diabetes.jsp>.

<sup>8</sup> "High Blood Pressure (Hypertension)." 16 Sept. 2005. Mayo Clinic. <http://mayoclinic.com/health/high-blood-pressure/DS00100>.

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<sup>10</sup> "Signs and Symptoms of High Blood Pressure." National Institute of Health: National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. [http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/dci/Diseases/Hbp/HBP\\_SignsAndSymptoms.html](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/dci/Diseases/Hbp/HBP_SignsAndSymptoms.html).

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<sup>14</sup> "High Cholesterol." Cardiology Channel. Feb. 2005. <http://www.cardiologychannel.com/hypercholesterolemia/causes.shtml>.

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