



By: *Alex J. Domingue*

Let's Talk About Men's Health

This month, November, is specifically recognized as “Men’s Health Awareness” month. Surveys conducted on men’s health have found that men don’t like talking about their health. In fact, a national telephone survey of 500 men ages 18 to 70 found that most men would rather talk about almost any other subject rather than talk about the current state of their health. Whether men are silent on this principal issue because their health is on the backburner to the stresses of their daily lives or because they are embarrassed to have these discussions, conversations about men’s health are necessary. In fact, the lack of conversations regarding men’s health is arguably one of the reasons the United States has such concerning statistics surrounding this issue.

To combat this issue, there are many campaigns that have been conducted to raise awareness for men’s health. But one campaign has been particularly effective: “Movember.” Many of us know November as “No Shave November,” a month where men are given an excuse to grow out a funky mustache or try out those sideburns their significant other hates. Despite this trend simply being appealing to men, it has a meaningful background and can be a useful tool to remind men to focus on their health. The original slogan for “No Shave November” was “Movember,” a slogan which was meant to kick off a worldwide movement where ordinary men would take on the brave task of growing a moustache for charity in a bid to raise awareness about men’s health issues, such as prostate cancer, testicular cancer, and mental health. This trend started in 2003 by two men who jokingly decided to bring back in fashion the moustache by convincing their friends to grow one. The men had been inspired by a friend’s mother who was fundraising for breast cancer, so the men associated the moustache with the pink ribbon. The

TALKING: Men's Health Statistics

- Heart disease is the leading cause of death for men in the United States, killing 382,776 men in 2020 – that’s about 1 in every 4 male deaths.
- More than 60% of adult American men are overweight or obese.
- In 2020, only 28.3% of men aged 18 and over met the 2018 federal physical activity guidelines for aerobic and muscle strengthening activity.
- Over six million men suffer from depression each year.
- Low levels of testosterone are correlated with depression, stress, and mood swings, especially among older men.
- Men are less likely than women to seek help for depression, substance abuse and stressful life events due to: reluctance to talk, social norms, and downplaying symptoms.

ACTING: What Can I Do?

1. Talk about your health and challenge your friends to talk about theirs.
2. Have a morning routine of breathing and stretching techniques a few minutes after waking up can have long lasting effects on the outlook for your day.
3. Remember that cardio is your friend. Our hearts need a workout every so often, especially if you want to reap the rewards later in life.
4. Bodyweight workouts are simple, yet effective. Whether that means doing step-ups on a chair, body weight squats, or a quick ten pushups, minor exercises like these can have long lasting impressions on your physical health.
5. Try to see the positive side of things as often as possible will make you feel better and can strengthen your mental health for tougher times. Staying positive is easier said than done, but you will thank yourself down the road for practicing it now.

campaign eventually spread and is now used around the world to not only raise awareness for men's health, but also to raise money for charities to aid in men in their pursuit for good health. The trend sprouted into the birth of the Movember Foundation, the only charity that is tackling men's health on a global scale year-round. The Movember Foundation has not only continued the "Movember" tradition by encouraging men around the world to wear a moustache for 30 days to turn themselves into a walking, talking billboard for men's health, but they have also begun challenging men to a 30-day fitness challenge to help men actively better their own health in addition to just talking about it.

Bill Richardson famously noted that recognizing and preventing men's health problems is not just a man's issue, but it is a family issue because it has impacts on wives, mothers, daughters, and sisters. It is important that not only men take care of their own health, but also that the people in their lives remind them about the importance of taking care of their health. Many of the major health risks that men face on a regular basis can be prevented by utilizing healthy habits such as regular exercise, a healthy diet, and stress reduction techniques. We all want to be healthy, but as stubborn men, we repeatedly sacrifice our health for other aspects of our lives.

So now that you are aware of the issue and you know how to combat it, I challenge you: Don't squander your health in search of wealth. Instead, man up today, and live your life in a healthier way.

