

# Men Look After Your Health

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**Men's Health Week** has been a national event since 2002 and focuses on health issues related to men.

Each year the focus is on a different aspect of men's health. This year the focus will be on belly fat. Why is belly fat considered a problem? It's a problem because some of your fat is right under your skin while other fat is deeper inside, around your heart, lungs, liver, and other organs. It's that deeper fat – called "visceral" fat – that may be the bigger problem.

A large amount of belly fat increases your risk of:

- Cardiovascular disease
- Insulin resistance and type 2 diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Colorectal cancer
- Premature death from any cause
- Sleep apnoea



## Tips for Staying Healthy

- Get physical! - Regular, intense exercise for 30 minutes a day has been found to reduce depression
- Control your stress - Stress is not only unpleasant, but it may also harm your health by boosting inflammation in the body and raising your risk of heart disease
- Stay connected - Having a good network of friends and family is associated with greater longevity
- Consider a PSA test - Think about getting a prostate specific antigen (PSA) test. This blood test can catch prostate cancer early
- Watch your blood sugar – Prediabetes, a condition in which blood sugar is elevated but not quite high enough to be classified as diabetes is nearly as toxic to the body as diabetes itself
- Cut back on fizzy drinks - Along with expanding your waistline, fructose (the type of sugar found in soft drinks) may also increase your risk of high blood pressure
- Kick the habit - Set an example by choosing not to smoke and encourage others to quit smoking too
- Go fish - Fish is a great source of protein and is loaded with heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids
- Have some fun in the sun - Just 15 to 20 minutes of sunlight exposure each day can supply your daily need for vitamin D, but don't forget the sun cream!

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## Statistics on mental health and men

Day-to-day stress and difficult times can wear down our mental health. If you are struggling with your mental health, you are not alone. In fact, about 1 out of 4 adults suffer from a mental health condition each year.

- 12.5% of men in the UK are suffering from one of the common mental health disorders (e.g. depression, anxiety, phobia, obsessive compulsive disorder and panic disorder)
- On average 191,000 men a year report stress, depression or anxiety caused or made worse by work
- Suicide is the single most common cause of death in men under 45
- Men are believed to be more likely to suffer from personality disorders (5.4% of men compared to 3.4% of women)
- Men report significantly lower life satisfaction than women
- One man in five dies before the age of 65
- 87% of rough sleepers are men
- Men have measurably lower access to the social support of friends, relatives and community
- Men are nearly three times more likely than women to become alcohol dependent

*Compiled by the Men's Health Forum, June 2016.*

## What support is available?

What support can you get from your Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)?

You can discuss any mental health, wellbeing or physical health matter in confidence with Validium's EAP teams of counsellors and health specialists by contacting the EAP helpline. You can also view information on a variety of health issues by going to the online resource vClub.

Your EAP can also help put you in touch with local and national resources to help with a wide range of men's mental and physical health issues.

## Useful contacts

[www.menshealthforum.org.uk](http://www.menshealthforum.org.uk)

[www.mentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk)

Samaritans - 116 123 (Free from all landlines and mobiles in the UK and ROI) or by email to [jo@samaritans.org.uk](mailto:jo@samaritans.org.uk)

Mind – 0300 123 3393



# 0800 3 58 48 58

Outside UK: +44 141 271 7179

For online support join vClub at [validium.com](http://validium.com)

Username: **NetworkRail**

Password: **onlinesupport**



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