

Men's Health

Men's health week in the United States is celebrated annually as the week leading up to Father's Day.

Starting Monday and ending Sunday, the purpose of Men's Health Week is to heighten the awareness of preventable health problems and encourage early detection and treatment of disease among men and boys. The week gives health care providers, public policy makers, the media and individuals an opportunity to encourage men and boys to seek regular medical advice and early treatment for disease and injury. The response has been overwhelming with hundreds of awareness activities in the USA since Men's Health Week was created by Congress in 1994.

Michelle Thacker, Family Nurse Practitioner at Lawrence County Memorial Hospital's Primary Care Clinic, says it's a good opportunity for men to have an annual check-up with their family provider.

"It's a good time to have your regular yearly labs done," said Thacker. "You always want to keep tabs on your blood pressure, cholesterol and those kind of things. It's a good time to have a PSA (Prostate-Specific Antigen) screening, as well."

Observers of the week are sometimes seen wearing a blue ribbon as a symbol of their support for the fight against prostate cancer. However, health officials stress, problems affecting men's health extend far beyond prostate cancer and other commonly recognized men's illnesses.

Therefore, the week is marked with awareness campaigns to highlight additional health concerns such as diabetes, osteoporosis, family health, workplace accident's and men's higher likelihood of suicide or being a victim of a homicide.

Even breast cancer can't be ignored, according to Thacker.

"We think of breast cancer occurring only in women, but men can get it, too," she said. "Men need to keep an eye on things, and see their provider should something peculiar crop up."

Men's Health Week was created by Congress in 1994 to bring awareness to the situation. The Bill was sponsored by former Kansas Senator Bob Dole and former New Mexico Congressman Bill Richardson.

Men's health by the numbers

- 5 — Men should eat five portions of fruit and vegetables each day.
- 10 — Cigarette smokers die on average 10 years younger than non-smokers.
- 10 — Wealthy men live an average of 10 years longer than men who are less well off.
- 20 — Twenty percent of men die before age 65.
- 40 — Forty percent of men die before age 75.
- 14 — Men should limit themselves to 14 units (seven beers) of alcohol each week.
- 37 — A waist size of 37 inches or more puts one at increased risk of heart disease, diabetes and cancer.
- 75 — In the United States, 75 percent of all suicides are committed by men.
- 120/80 — Men should aim for a normal blood pressure of 120 over 80.
- 150 — Men should aim for 150 minutes of moderate physical activity each week.