

Time to man up and get your check up

Written by Gallupsun Staff
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New Mexico Dept. Of Health

Fact: We guys tend to try being too manly for our own good. Remember a couple of weeks ago when singer Enrique Iglesias sliced his hand on the blades of a drone flying over his concert stage? Consider that Exhibit: A.

The man actually continued to perform for half an hour with a blood-soaked t-shirt wrapped around his hand before deciding maybe he needed to see a doctor. Turned out it was more than a cut. Iglesias broke his hand and required reconstructive surgery from the blade slices.

Here's another fact: according to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), men are 24-percent less likely than women to have visited a doctor within the past year. That's Exhibit: B, and, frankly, that's enough for me to rest my case.

The truth is if men would only make their health a priority, if only they would take some kind of action every day, they'd likely live a stronger and healthier life.

Next week will be National Men's Health Week. It's celebrated each year the week leading up to and including Father's Day, which this year is June 15th-21st. During this week, individuals, families, communities, and others work to raise awareness of ways to promote healthy living and encourage early detection and treatment of disease among men and boys.

Fathers particularly are encouraged to lead by example. Eat healthy, be physically active, have regular checkups, get vaccinated, be smoke-free, prevent injuries, sleep well, and manage stress. Talk about a tall order, but it can be done.

For example, the New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH) offers help for residents wanting to quit smoking. Smoking is still the number one cause of preventable death and disease in the United States. To learn how to kick the habit for good, dial 1-800-QUIT-NOW or for Spanish 1-855-DEJELO-YA. These free quit lines offer a lot of resources, including free quit coaching, a

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free quit plan, free educational materials, and referrals to other resources.

As for getting regular checkups, they can assure trouble is caught early. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), thousands of men and women in New Mexico die every year from heart disease and stroke, and thousands of new cancer cases are diagnosed annually. The top three cancers for men in the state are prostate, lung and colorectal – and all of it is readily treatable when caught early or outright preventable when you take better care of yourself.

So before getting your check-up, NMDOH and the CDC, bring you this short list of things to do:

- Double check your family history: Family history might influence your risk of developing heart disease, stroke, diabetes, or cancer. Are there any new conditions or diseases that have occurred in your close relatives since your last visit? If so, let your health care provider know.
- Find out if you are due for any general screenings or vaccinations. Have you had the recommended screening tests based on your age, general health, family history, and lifestyle? Check with your health care provider to see if it's time for any vaccinations, follow-up exams, or tests.
- Write down a list of issues and questions to take with you. For example, have you noticed any body changes, including lumps or skin changes? Are you depressed? Are you experiencing any new aches or pains?

For more information about Men's Health Week visit the National Men's Health Week website.