



Men's Health

TOOLKIT

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Men’s health is more than checkups and lab results. It’s about noticing what’s changing in your body, paying attention to how you feel, and knowing when to ask for help. This toolkit covers ten key health concerns that affect men—physically, mentally, and emotionally. Each section offers clear information, practical tips, and reminders that you don’t have to figure it out alone. Whether you’re managing a condition or just trying to stay ahead of it, this guide is here to support you.



Cardiovascular Disease

Heart disease doesn't always start with a dramatic moment. Sometimes it's a quiet shift. You're more tired than usual. You get winded walking up stairs. Maybe your chest feels tight, or your heart skips a beat. These signs can be easy to ignore, but they matter.

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) includes several conditions that affect the heart and blood vessels. Coronary artery disease, heart failure, arrhythmias, and stroke are the most common. These conditions can limit blood flow, damage organs, and increase the risk of serious complications.

For men, the risk is especially high: CVD remains a leading cause of mortality globally, with men facing a higher risk compared to women. According to the American Heart Association (AHA), nearly one in three men in the United States have some form of CVD. Men are also more likely to experience heart attacks at a younger age than women. Genetics play a role, but so do lifestyle choices. Smoking, poor diet, lack of exercise, and high stress levels all contribute. So does ignoring symptoms.

Common Signs of CVD to Watch for:

- Chest pain or discomfort, especially during activity or stress
- Shortness of breath, even at rest
- Fatigue that doesn't improve with rest
- Pain in the neck, jaw, back, or arms
- Lightheadedness or dizziness
- Irregular heartbeat or palpitations
- Swelling in the legs, ankles, or feet

These symptoms don't always mean heart disease, but they're worth checking out. Some men don't experience chest pain at all. Instead, they feel unusually tired or anxious. That's why it's important to pay attention to changes in how you feel.

Heart disease doesn't just affect the body. It can take a toll on mental health too. Living with a chronic condition can lead to anxiety, depression, or feelings of isolation. You might worry about your future, your family, or your ability to keep up with daily life. That stress can make heart symptoms worse.

Ways to Care for Your Heart and Mind:

- **Move regularly.** Aim for 30 minutes of activity most days. Walking, biking, or even dancing counts.
- **Eat with care.** Choose foods that support heart health—vegetables, fruits, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats. Limit salt, sugar, and processed foods.
- **Know your numbers.** Blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar levels are key indicators. Get them checked and understand what they mean.
- **Quit smoking.** It's one of the most important steps you can take. Support is available.
- **Limit alcohol.** Too much can raise blood pressure and damage the heart.
- **Sleep well.** Poor sleep increases the risk of heart problems. Try to get 7–9 hours each night.
- **Manage stress.** Breathing exercises, mindfulness, and therapy can help. So can talking to someone you trust.

If you've been diagnosed with a heart condition, follow your treatment plan. Take medications as prescribed. Keep your appointments. Ask questions. You deserve to understand what's happening in your body and how to manage it.

Don't wait for a crisis. If something feels off, speak up. Early action can make a big difference.

Additional Resources

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/>
2. <https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/consumer-healthcare/men-and-heart-disease>





Cancer

Cancer isn't one disease. It's a group of diseases that can affect nearly every part of the body. For men, some types are more common than others. Each one brings its own risks, symptoms, and treatment options. What they all share is the need for early detection and ongoing care.

Cancer doesn't just affect the body. It can change how you see yourself, how you move through the world, and how you feel day to day. The emotional weight can be just as heavy as the physical symptoms. Fear, anger, sadness, and uncertainty are common. So is the pressure to stay strong. You don't have to carry it alone.

Let's look at four types of cancer that affect men most often.

Skin Cancer

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the U.S. It often starts with a mole or spot that changes in size, shape, or color. Men are more likely than women to develop melanoma, the most serious form.

What to Watch for:

- New growths or sores that don't heal
- Moles that change in color, size, or texture
- Spots that itch, bleed, or feel painful

What Helps:

- Use sunscreen every day, even when it's cloudy
- Wear protective clothing and hats outdoors
- Avoid tanning beds
- Check your skin monthly and see a dermatologist for anything unusual

Skin cancer can be treated effectively when caught early. If something looks or feels off, get it checked.

Prostate Cancer

Prostate cancer is one of the most common cancers in men, especially after age 50. It often grows slowly and may not cause symptoms right away.

What to Watch for:

- Difficulty starting or stopping urination
- Weak or interrupted urine flow
- Frequent urination, especially at night
- Pain or burning during urination
- Blood in urine or semen

What Helps:

- Talk to your doctor about screening, especially if you're over 50 or have a family history
- Eat a balanced diet with plenty of fruits and vegetables
- Stay active and maintain a healthy weight

Prostate cancer can be managed well when found early. Screening options include a PSA blood test and a digital rectal exam. Ask your provider what's right for you.

Testicular Cancer

Testicular cancer is less common but tends to affect younger men, typically between ages 15 and 35. It's highly treatable, especially when caught early.

What to Watch for:

- A lump or swelling in either testicle
- A feeling of heaviness in the scrotum
- Dull ache in the lower abdomen or groin
- Sudden collection of fluid in the scrotum

What Helps:

- Perform monthly self-exams to check for changes
- See a provider if you notice anything unusual

Treatment may include surgery, radiation, or chemotherapy. Most men recover fully, but the emotional impact can linger. It's okay to talk about it.

Colon Cancer

Colon cancer often starts as small growths called polyps in the colon or rectum. These can turn into cancer over time. Screening can catch it early or prevent it altogether.

What to Watch for:

- Changes in bowel habits (diarrhea, constipation)
- Blood in the stool
- Abdominal pain or cramping
- Unexplained weight loss
- Fatigue

What Helps:

- Get screened starting at age 45, or earlier if you have risk factors
- Eat more fiber and fewer processed foods
- Stay active and limit alcohol
- Don't ignore changes in digestion

Colon cancer is one of the most preventable cancers. A colonoscopy can find and remove polyps before they become cancer.



Cancer can be overwhelming. It's okay to feel scared or uncertain. What matters is taking action—getting screened, noticing changes, and asking for help. If you're living with cancer, support is available. Talk to your provider about treatment options, mental health support, and what to expect. You don't have to face it alone.

Additional Resources

1. <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/skin-cancer.html>
2. <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/prostate-cancer.html>
3. <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/testicular-cancer.html>
4. <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/colon-rectal-cancer.html>



Injuries

Injuries happen fast. A fall at work. A pulled muscle during a weekend game. A car accident. Sometimes it's a broken bone. Other times, it's a concussion or a back strain that lingers for months. For men, injuries are one of the top reasons for emergency room visits—and one of the most common causes of missed work.

The physical impact is obvious. Pain, swelling, limited movement. But injuries don't stop at the body. They can affect how you feel about yourself, your independence, and your ability to keep up with daily life. If you're used to being active, even a minor injury can feel like a major setback.

Common Injuries

- Sprains and strains
- Fractures
- Head injuries, including concussions
- Back and neck injuries
- Cuts, burns, and bruises
- Overuse injuries from repetitive motion

Work-related injuries are especially common in jobs that involve physical labor, heavy lifting, or long hours on your feet. Sports and recreational activities also carry risks, especially without proper warm-up or safety gear.

Injuries can also affect mental health. Chronic pain can lead to frustration, irritability, or depression. Being sidelined from work or hobbies can bring feelings of isolation or loss of purpose. It's not just about healing the body—it's about staying connected and supported during recovery.

Safety Tips

- **Use safety gear.** Helmets, gloves, back braces, and other equipment can prevent serious harm.
- **Warm up before activity.** Stretching and light movement prepare your body for exercise or physical work.
- **Lift with care.** Use your legs, not your back. Ask for help with heavy loads.
- **Take breaks.** Fatigue increases the risk of accidents. Rest helps prevent mistakes.
- **Know your limits.** Pushing through pain can turn a small issue into a long-term problem.
- **Follow treatment plans.** If you're injured, stick to your provider's advice. Rest when needed. Do physical therapy if it's recommended.
- **Talk about it.** If you're feeling down or frustrated during recovery, reach out. Mental health support is part of healing.

Some injuries heal quickly. Others take time. Either way, you don't have to go through it alone. A healthcare provider can help you understand what's going on, what to expect, and how to get back to what you love doing.



Additional Resources

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/injury/>
2. <https://orthoinfo.aaos.org/>



Diabetes

Diabetes doesn't always show up with a warning. You might feel more tired than usual. You're thirstier. You're using the bathroom more often. Maybe you've lost weight without trying. These signs can be easy to miss, but they matter.

Diabetes happens when your body can't properly use or make insulin, the hormone that helps turn food into energy. When insulin doesn't work the way it should, blood sugar builds up. Over time, that extra sugar can damage blood vessels, nerves, and organs.

There are two main types. Type 1 is usually diagnosed earlier in life and requires insulin every day. Type 2 is more common in adults and often linked to weight, inactivity, and family history. Many men don't know they have it until they're dealing with complications.

Men are at a higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes compared to women, with factors such as age, family history, ethnicity, obesity, physical inactivity, and poor diet contributing to increased susceptibility. According to the CDC, about **15.4% of adult men** in the U.S. have diabetes—12.6% diagnosed, and another 2.8% undiagnosed. That's roughly 1 in 7 men living with a condition that can affect nearly every part of the body. The risk increases with age, but younger men aren't immune. Many cases go unnoticed until symptoms become harder to ignore.

Common Signs of Diabetes to Watch for:

- Frequent urination
- Increased thirst
- Fatigue
- Blurred vision
- Slow-healing cuts or sores
- Tingling or numbness in hands or feet
- Unexplained weight loss

Diabetes affects more than blood sugar. It raises the risk for heart disease, kidney problems, and vision loss. It can also affect sexual health and energy levels. Living with diabetes can feel like a full-time job—checking numbers, watching food, taking medication. That pressure can lead to burnout, anxiety, or depression.

Strategies for Managing Diabetes

- **Know your numbers:** A simple blood test can show if your blood sugar is in a healthy range. If you're over 45 or have risk factors, ask your provider about screening.
- **Move more:** Physical activity helps your body use insulin better. Aim for 30 minutes most days.
- **Eat with balance:** Focus on whole foods—vegetables, fruits, lean proteins, and whole grains. Watch portion sizes and limit added sugars.
- **Lose a little weight:** Even a small amount can improve blood sugar control.
- **Take medications as prescribed:** Some people need pills, others need insulin. Your provider can help you find what works.
- **Check your feet:** Diabetes can cause nerve damage. Look for cuts, blisters, or changes in color.
- **Talk about how you're feeling:** Managing a chronic condition can be overwhelming. Mental health support is part of diabetes care.

If you've been diagnosed, you're not alone. Millions of men live with diabetes and manage it every day. Regular check-ins with healthcare providers, following treatment plans, and ongoing self-care practices are essential to managing diabetes and prevention for men of all ages. You don't have to be perfect. You just have to keep going. Small steps add up.



Additional Resources

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/php/data-research/index.html>
2. <https://www.diabetes.org/>
3. <https://idf.org/about-diabetes/diabetes-facts-figures/>



Alcohol-Related Issues

Alcohol consumption is prevalent in many societies, but men often face unique challenges and health risks associated with their drinking habits. Alcohol affects more than just the liver. It touches nearly every system in the body. Over time, heavy drinking can raise blood pressure, weaken the heart, and increase the risk of stroke. It can damage the stomach lining, interfere with nutrient absorption, and disrupt hormone levels. It also affects sleep, often leading to poor rest and daytime fatigue.

The mental health effects are just as real. Alcohol can worsen anxiety and depression. It can make it harder to manage stress, not easier. It may feel like a way to relax, but it often leaves people feeling more irritable, more isolated, and less in control. For some, alcohol becomes a way to avoid difficult emotions. That avoidance can lead to dependence.

Men are more likely than women to drink excessively, and more likely to take risks while drinking—driving, fighting, or skipping safety precautions. These behaviors increase the chance of injury, legal trouble, and long-term health problems.

If drinking is starting to affect your relationships, your work, or your sense of well-being, it's worth paying attention. You don't have to hit a "rock bottom" to make a change. You just have to notice what's not working.

Liver Disease

Men are at a higher risk of developing alcohol-related liver disease compared to women due to differences in metabolism and alcohol processing. The liver filters toxins from the blood, helps with digestion, and stores energy. It's strong, but not invincible. Too much alcohol over time can cause inflammation, scarring, and eventually liver failure. This progression often starts with fatty liver, moves to alcoholic hepatitis, and can end in cirrhosis. **Watch for these symptoms:**

- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea or vomiting
- Abdominal pain or swelling
- Yellowing of the skin or eyes (jaundice)
- Dark urine or pale stool
- Easy bruising or bleeding

These symptoms can be subtle at first. Many men don't realize there's a problem until the damage is advanced. That's why regular checkups matter, especially if alcohol is part of your routine.

Try These Strategies for Managing Alcohol-Related Issues

- **Know your limits:** The CDC defines moderate drinking as up to 2 drinks per day for men. More than that increases risk.
- **Take breaks:** Try alcohol-free days during the week. Notice how your body and mind feel.
- **Watch for patterns:** Drinking to cope with stress, boredom, or loneliness can be a sign it's time to talk to someone.
- **Get support:** If cutting back feels hard, you're not alone. There are programs, counselors, and support groups that can help.
- **Check your liver health:** A simple blood test can show how your liver is functioning. Ask your provider if it's time for a check-in.

If you're living with liver disease, treatment depends on the stage. In early stages, stopping alcohol can allow the liver to heal. In later stages, medical care becomes more urgent. Either way, support is available.

You don't have to wait for a crisis to make a change. Small steps—like drinking less, eating well, and getting regular sleep—can protect your liver and improve your overall health.

Additional Resources

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/>
2. <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/liver-disease/alcohol-related>



Respiratory Illness

Breathing is something most people don't think about—until it becomes difficult. A cough that won't go away. Shortness of breath after climbing stairs. Wheezing during sleep. These symptoms can signal a respiratory illness, and for men, they're more common than many realize.

Respiratory illnesses affect the lungs and airways. Some are short-term, like bronchitis or a bad cold. Others are long-term, like asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Smoking, air pollution, workplace exposure to dust or chemicals, and even past infections can all increase risk.

Men are more likely than women to develop serious respiratory conditions, especially if they smoke or work in environments with poor air quality. COPD, which includes chronic bronchitis and emphysema, is one of the leading causes of death in men. Asthma, while often diagnosed in childhood, can persist or appear later in life.

What to Watch for:

- Persistent cough
- Shortness of breath
- Wheezing
- Chest tightness
- Frequent respiratory infections
- Fatigue, especially after mild activity

These symptoms can affect more than just the lungs. Struggling to breathe can lead to anxiety, panic attacks, and sleep problems. It can also limit physical activity, which affects mood, energy, and overall health. Living with a chronic respiratory illness can feel isolating, especially when symptoms flare up without warning.

If you're noticing changes in your breathing, don't wait. A healthcare provider can run simple tests to check lung function and help you understand what's going on. Early treatment can make a big difference. And check out these resources:

- <https://www.lung.org/lung-health-diseases>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/copd/>
- <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/asthma>

What Helps:

- **Don't smoke.** If you do, talk to someone about quitting. It's the single most important step for lung health.
- **Avoid secondhand smoke and pollutants.** Use air filters at home. Wear a mask if you work around dust or chemicals.
- **Stay active.** Gentle movement helps keep lungs strong. Walking, swimming, or yoga can improve breathing.
- **Get vaccinated.** Respiratory illnesses like flu and pneumonia can be more dangerous if you already have lung issues. Vaccines help protect you.
- **Use medications as prescribed.** Inhalers, steroids, or other treatments can reduce symptoms and prevent flare-ups.
- **Track your symptoms.** Keep a journal or use an app to notice patterns. Share this with your provider.
- **Talk about how you're feeling.** Struggling to breathe can be scary. Mental health support can help you manage the emotional side of respiratory illness.



Viruses

Viruses are part of everyday life. A cold that knocks you out for a few days. The flu that keeps you in bed for a week. A stomach bug that spreads through the house. Most pass quickly. Some don't. And a few can lead to long-term health problems if left untreated.

For men, viral infections can hit harder when there are other health issues in the mix—diabetes, heart disease, or a weakened immune system. Some viruses, like hepatitis or HPV, may not cause symptoms right away but can lead to serious complications over time. Others, like COVID-19, can affect the lungs, heart, and brain long after the initial illness is over.

Common Viral Infections

- **Influenza (Flu):** A seasonal virus that spreads easily and causes fever, chills, body aches, and fatigue. It can lead to pneumonia or hospitalization, especially in people with other health conditions.
- **COVID-19:** Caused by the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2. Symptoms range from mild to severe and may include cough, fever, loss of taste or smell, and fatigue. Some people experience long-term effects.
- **Common Cold:** Usually caused by rhinoviruses. It brings sneezing, sore throat, and congestion. It's mild but very contagious.
- **Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV):** Often affects young children but can cause serious illness in older adults. Symptoms include cough, wheezing, and difficulty breathing.
- **Hepatitis A, B, and C:** These viruses affect the liver. Hepatitis A spreads through contaminated food or water. B and C spread through blood or body fluids. Chronic hepatitis can lead to liver damage.
- **Human Papillomavirus (HPV):** A sexually transmitted virus. Some types cause genital warts. Others can lead to cancer, including throat and anal cancer in men.
- **Norovirus:** A fast-spreading stomach virus. It causes vomiting, diarrhea, and stomach cramps. Often linked to foodborne outbreaks.
- **Herpes Simplex Virus (HSV):** HSV-1 usually causes cold sores. HSV-2 is linked to genital herpes. Both can cause recurring outbreaks and are spread through skin-to-skin contact.

Some viruses clear up on their own. Others require treatment. And some can stay in the body long-term, flaring up from time to time. Living with a chronic viral infection can affect more than just your physical health. It can bring stress, shame, or fear—especially if the virus is misunderstood or carries stigma.

Common Signs of Viruses to Watch for:

- Fever or chills
- Fatigue
- Cough or sore throat
- Body aches
- Headache
- Nausea or diarrhea
- Skin rashes or sores

Treatment and Management Strategies

- **Get vaccinated.** Vaccines are available for flu, COVID-19, hepatitis, and HPV. They reduce the risk of infection and make symptoms milder if you do get sick.
- **Wash your hands.** It's simple, but it works. Soap and water help stop the spread of many viruses.
- **Stay home when you're sick.** Rest helps you recover and protects others.
- **Use protection.** Some viruses spread through sexual contact. Condoms and regular testing help reduce risk.
- **Talk to your provider.** If you've been exposed to a virus or have symptoms that don't go away, get checked. Early treatment can prevent complications.
- **Take care of your immune system.** Sleep, nutrition, movement, and stress management all help your body fight off infections.

If you're living with a chronic viral condition, you're not alone. Support is available. Treatment can help manage symptoms and reduce the risk of spreading the virus to others. Mental health support can also make a difference, especially if you're feeling isolated or overwhelmed.

Additional Resources

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/infections/>
2. <https://www.who.int/health-topics/infectious-diseases>



Depression & Suicide

Depression doesn't always look like sadness. For many men, it shows up as irritability, fatigue, or a loss of interest in things that used to matter. You might feel numb. You might feel angry. You might not feel much of anything at all. And you might not talk about it.

Men are less likely to be diagnosed with depression, but that doesn't mean they're not struggling. They're also less likely to seek help. That silence can be dangerous. Suicide is one of the leading causes of death for men, especially between the ages of 25 and 64.

In 2023, more than 49,000 people in the U.S. died by suicide—about one death every 11 minutes. [Men made up nearly 80% of those deaths](#), even though they represent just half the population. The suicide rate among men was roughly four times higher than among women. [Adults aged 85 and older had the highest suicide rates](#), followed closely by men aged 25 to 34.

Depression can affect how you think, how you sleep, how you eat, and how you connect with others. It can make it hard to get out of bed or focus at work. It can make you feel like you're failing, even when you're doing your best. And it can make you believe that things won't get better.

Common Warning Signs:

- Feeling hopeless or empty
- Loss of interest in work, hobbies, or relationships
- Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much
- Changes in appetite or weight
- Fatigue or low energy
- Difficulty concentrating
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Thoughts of death or suicide

These symptoms don't always come all at once. Sometimes they build slowly. Sometimes they're easy to explain away—just tired, just stressed, just busy. But if they're sticking around, it's time to talk to someone.

Strategies to Manage Depression

- **Talk to a provider.** A primary care doctor or mental health professional can help you figure out what's going on and what to do next.
- **Consider therapy.** Talking to a therapist can help you understand your thoughts and feelings. It's not about fixing you—it's about helping you feel more like yourself again.
- **Medication may help.** Antidepressants can ease symptoms for many people. Your provider can help you decide if it's a good fit.
- **Stay connected.** Isolation makes depression worse. Reach out to a friend, a family member, or a support group.
- **Move your body.** Even a short walk can help shift your mood.
- **Limit alcohol and drugs.** They may numb the pain short-term, but they often make things harder in the long run.
- **Be honest with yourself.** If you're not okay, that's okay. You don't have to pretend.

If you're thinking about suicide, you're not alone. There are people who want to help. You can call or text 988 in the U.S. to reach the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. It's free, confidential, and available 24/7.

Mental health is health. You deserve support, just like anyone else. You don't have to wait until things get worse. You can start today. Take a step forward and reach out to your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to get the support you need.



Additional Resources

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/facts/data.html>
2. <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression>
3. <https://988lifeline.org/>

Call or text 988

If you or someone you know needs immediate help, reach out to the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.



Influenza & Pneumonia

Flu season comes around every year, but for some people, it's more than just a few days in bed. Influenza and pneumonia can lead to serious illness, especially in men with other health conditions like diabetes, heart disease, or asthma. These infections can hit hard and fast—and recovery isn't always quick.

In the 2024–2025 flu season, the [CDC reported a sharp rise in flu-related hospitalizations](#), with rates reaching the highest levels in over 15 years. The flu has outpaced COVID-19 in both infections and hospitalizations for the first time since the pandemic began.

Influenza

Influenza is a contagious respiratory virus. It spreads through coughs, sneezes, and even talking.

What to Watch for:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Muscle or body aches
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Runny or stuffy nose

Most people recover in a week or two, but some develop complications. That's where pneumonia comes in.

Pneumonia

Pneumonia is an infection in one or both lungs. It can be caused by viruses, bacteria, or fungi. When it follows the flu, it's often more severe.

What to Watch for:

- Cough with phlegm
- Chest pain when breathing or coughing
- Shortness of breath
- High fever or chills
- Fatigue
- Confusion, especially in older adults

Men are more likely than women to be hospitalized for pneumonia. They're also more likely to delay care, which can make symptoms worse. If you're feeling short of breath or your fever won't break, don't wait. These infections can escalate quickly.

Here's What Helps:

- **Get vaccinated.** The flu shot is updated each year to match circulating strains. There are also vaccines for pneumonia, especially recommended for adults over 65 or those with chronic conditions.
- **Wash your hands.** It's one of the simplest ways to prevent the spread of germs.
- **Stay home when you're sick.** Rest helps your body recover and protects others.
- **Cover your mouth and nose.** Use a tissue or your elbow when you cough or sneeze.
- **Avoid smoking.** It damages the lungs and makes it harder to fight off infections.
- **Talk to your provider.** If you're at higher risk, ask about antiviral medications or additional vaccines.

Influenza and pneumonia don't just affect the lungs. They can drain your energy, disrupt your routine, and leave you feeling anxious or isolated. If you're recovering from a serious infection, give yourself time. Healing isn't always fast, and it's okay to ask for help.



Additional Resources

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/>
2. <https://www.cdc.gov/pneumonia/>
3. <https://www.cdc.gov/flu-burden/php/data-vis/2024-2025.html>



HIV & AIDS

HIV doesn't always come with symptoms. Some people live with it for years without knowing. That's why testing matters. That's why conversations matter. And that's why stigma needs to be replaced with facts and support.

HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) attacks the immune system. If left untreated, it can lead to AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome), a condition where the body can't fight off infections and disease. With early diagnosis and treatment, most people with HIV live long, healthy lives. But without care, the virus can cause serious complications.

HIV/AIDS remains a significant global health challenge, with men disproportionately affected by the epidemic. In 2023, over 39,000 people were diagnosed with HIV in the U.S. and its territories. [More than 80% of those diagnoses were in men.](#) About two-thirds were linked to male-to-male sexual contact. Men aged 25 to 44 made up 60% of new cases.

HIV spreads through blood, semen, vaginal fluids, and breast milk. It's most commonly transmitted through unprotected sex or sharing needles. It's not spread through casual contact—hugging, sharing food, or using the same toilet.

Early Symptoms May Feel Like the Flu:

- Fever
- Chills
- Rash
- Fatigue
- Sore throat
- Swollen lymph nodes

These symptoms usually go away, but the virus stays in the body. Without treatment, HIV can weaken the immune system over time. That's when more serious symptoms start to appear.

Here's What Helps:

- **Get tested.** The only way to know your status is to get tested. It's quick, confidential, and often free.
- **Use protection.** Condoms reduce the risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.
- **Consider PrEP.** Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is a daily pill that helps prevent HIV. It's recommended for people at higher risk.
- **Don't share needles.** If you use injectable drugs, use clean equipment every time.
- **Start treatment early.** Antiretroviral therapy (ART) helps control the virus and protects your immune system. It also reduces the risk of passing HIV to others.
- **Stay in care.** Regular checkups and lab work help track your health and adjust treatment if needed.
- **Talk about it.** HIV can bring fear, shame, or isolation. You don't have to carry that alone. Support groups, counselors, and healthcare providers can help.

Living with HIV is different today than it was decades ago. Treatment works. People with HIV can have relationships, families, and full lives. But stigma still exists. That's why education and empathy matter.



Additional Resources

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv-data/nhss/hiv-diagnoses-deaths-and-prevalence-2025.html>
2. <https://www.hiv.gov/>
3. <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/index.html>



We're Here to Help!

Taking care of your health isn't always easy. It takes time, energy, and sometimes courage to speak up when something doesn't feel right. Whether you're managing a chronic condition, recovering from an injury, or just trying to stay ahead of what's next, you don't have to do it alone.

Uprise Health is here to support you—physically, mentally, and emotionally. We offer tools and services that meet you where you are. That includes access to licensed therapists, care navigators, and digital resources that help you manage stress, build healthy habits, and stay connected to care.

If you're dealing with depression or anxiety, we can connect you with someone to talk to. If you're recovering from illness or injury, we can help you find support that fits your needs. If you're navigating a new diagnosis or trying to make sense of symptoms, we can guide you toward answers.

We also offer resources for substance use, chronic condition management, and preventive care. Our digital platform makes it easy to access support on your schedule—whether that's a quick check-in or a longer conversation.

You don't have to wait for a crisis. You don't have to have all the answers. You just have to take the next step. And we'll be here when you do.

Remember – although difficult – asking for help is a sign of strength, not weakness. It shows that you value your well-being and are willing to take steps to improve it. You are not alone in this journey. Reach out, connect, and let others support you.

Call the EAP Today!

For more information, visit: members.uprisehealth.com
or call Uprise Health at: **1-800-395-1616**