Health Maintenance in Males

MAINTAIN REGULAR HEALTH EXAMS

- Maintain a healthy diet and normal weight. Increased weight leads to problems with blood pressure and diabetes. Decrease fat in the diet and increase exercise. Obtain a proper diet from your caregiver if necessary.
- High blood pressure causes heart and blood vessel problems. Check blood pressures regularly and keep them at normal limits. Aerobic exercise helps this. Persistent elevations of blood pressure should be treated with medications if weight loss and exercise are ineffective.
- Avoid smoking, drinking in excess (more than two drinks per day) or use of street drugs. Do not share needles with anyone. Ask for our help if you need assistance or instructions on stopping the use of alcohol, cigarettes, and/or drugs.
- Maintain normal blood lipids and cholesterol. Your caregiver can give instructions to help you keep your risk of heart disease or stroke at a lower level.
- Ask your caregiver if you are in need of earlier testing because of a strong family history of heart disease, or have signs of elevated testosterone (male sex hormone) levels. This can predispose you to earlier heart disease. Ask if you should have a stress test if your history suggests this. A stress test is a test done with you on a treadmill that stresses your heart to pick up heart disease prior to showing up as a problem.
- Practice safe sex. Unsafe sex is having an unprotected physical relationship with someone who is bisexual, homosexual, uses intravenous street drugs, or going with someone who has sexual relations with high-risk groups. Practicing safe sex helps you to avoid getting an STI (sexually transmitted infection). Some of the STIs are gonorrhea (the clap), chlamydia, syphilis, trichimonas, herpes, HPV (human papiloma virus) and HIV (human immunodeficiency virus). The herpes, HIV and HPV are viral illnesses that have no cure. These can result in disability, cancer and death.
- It is not safe for someone who has AIDS or is HIV positive to have unprotected sex with someone else who is positive. The reason for this is the fact that there are many different strains of HIV. If you have a strain that is readily treated with medications and then suddenly introduce a strain from a partner that has no further treatment options, you may suddenly have a strain of HIV that is untreatable. Even if you are both positive for HIV, it is still necessary to practice safe sex.
- Use sunscreen with a SPF of 15 or greater. Being outside in the sun when your shadow caused by the sun is shorter than you are, means you are being exposed to sun at greater intensity. Lighter skinned people are at a greater risk of skin cancer.
- Keep carbon monoxide and smoke detectors in your home and functioning at all times. Change the batteries every 6 months.
- Do monthly examinations of your testicles. The best time to do this is after a hot shower or bath when the tissues are looser. Notify your caregivers of any lumps, tenderness or changes in size or shape.
- Notify your caregivers of changes in moles, especially if there are changes in shapes, colors, a size larger than a pencil eraser, or development of new moles.
- Stay up to date with your tetanus shots and other required immunizations.

The BMI is a way of measuring how much of your body is fat. **Having a BMI above 27 increases the risk of heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, stroke and other problems related to obesity.**

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