

## What is your 'Picture of Health'?

- men on the island of Ireland are to be offered free copies of the new 'ACTION MAN: ten top tips for men's health' manual

As the final countdown to International Men's Health Week 2023 begins, the Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) is urging men across the island of Ireland to become an 'Action Man' and to follow ten top tips to improve their health. This is crucial, because research highlights that local men suffer a disproportionate burden of ill health.

Statistics in the '[Men's Health in Numbers](#)' publications, show that, for example:

- Local men continue to die younger than women do.
- Poor lifestyles (including smoking, drinking, diet and lack of exercise) are responsible for a large proportion of chronic diseases.
- Males have higher death rates than women for almost all of the leading causes of death, and at all ages.
- Men's mental health needs are often under the radar and remain unmet.
- Late presentation to health services can lead to a number of problems becoming untreatable ...

But this is not a lost cause, and much can be done to change this situation. [Men's Health Week](#) (Monday 12<sup>th</sup> June to Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> June [Father's Day]) offers an ideal opportunity to raise awareness of preventable health problems, support men and boys to live healthier lives, and encourage them to seek help or treatment at an early stage. This is the perfect time for all men and boys to make a fresh start, and take on simple, practical and realistic challenges to improve their health and live a longer life.

To support them, a new '[Action Man](#)' Manual has been produced - in both hard copy and as an online download. During Men's Health Week 2023, males are encouraged to get a copy of this free booklet, which has been written specifically for men in all parts of Ireland. It is being officially launched on the first day of Men's Health Week 2023.

The 'Action Man: ten top tips for men's health' manual doesn't preach or lecture, it simply explains:

- WHY an action is needed.
- WHAT can be done about it.
- HOW to find support if you need it.



Finian Murray, Senior Health Promotion and Improvement Officer in the HSE, and one of the authors of the Man Manual, explains:

*“The ten top tips put men into the driving seat, and give them the tools and DIY instructions to make positive changes - if they choose to be their own ‘Action Man’. It starts with a clear warning: reading this booklet could seriously improve your health.”*

Across Ireland, it is very common to hear people saying: *“ah, sure your man’s the picture of health.”* During Men’s Health Week 2023, everyone is being asked to think about what their ‘picture of health’ might look like and to go for it.

Men’s Health Week has been planned by almost one hundred partner organisations across the island of Ireland, and thousands of events - both large and small - have been arranged to celebrate this occasion. Key figures in society have also agreed to act as Ambassadors for the week, and to help to raise public awareness.

David Gillick (former European athletics champion, Irish Olympian and mental health advocate) points out:

*“Our physical and mental health is of huge importance. The statistics around male health are alarming, so this week is about raising awareness and encouraging men to check in with themselves. The aim is to empower and encourage men to do even one thing to better their physical and mental health.”*

While Dr Mark Rowe (physician, author, TedX Speaker and wellbeing expert) highlights:

*“Men’s Health Week is a timely reminder of what a priceless asset good health is. Whatever your ‘picture of health’ looks like, it’s all about starting. Perhaps by arranging that medical check-up, by moving more, by valuing your sleep, by making more time for your friends, by committing to eat more colour in your diet. Whatever you decide to do, remember that small steps can make a big difference over time. The best time to start is today. Never stop starting!”*

‘Action Man’ Gary [Spike] O’Sullivan (Irish middle-weight champion boxer) sums it all up:

*“Looking after your health is one of most important things that you can do. As my favourite motto goes: he who conquers himself is the mightiest warrior.”*

**ENDS**

*[followed by Editor’s Notes]*

## **EDITOR'S NOTES**

1. For more information or an interview, contact one of the members of the all-island Men's Health Week Planning Group:
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2. The 'Men's Health in Numbers' publications provide an up-to-date and comprehensive overview of key statistics on men's health on the island of Ireland. They are available for free downloading from the Men's Health Forum in Ireland website at:
  - Trends on the Island of Ireland - [www.mhfi.org/MensHealthInNumbers1.pdf](http://www.mhfi.org/MensHealthInNumbers1.pdf)
  - Irish Men's Health Report Card - [www.mhfi.org/MensHealthInNumbers2.pdf](http://www.mhfi.org/MensHealthInNumbers2.pdf)
  - Northern Ireland Men's Health Report Card - [www.mhfi.org/MensHealthInNumbers3.pdf](http://www.mhfi.org/MensHealthInNumbers3.pdf)
3. International Men's Health Week always begins on the Monday before Father's Day and ends on Father's Day itself. During 2023, it will run from Monday 12<sup>th</sup> until Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> June.
4. The overarching aims of MHW each year are to:
  - Heighten awareness of preventable health problems for males of all ages.
  - Support men and boys to engage in healthier lifestyle choices / activities.
  - Encourage the early detection and treatment of health difficulties in males.
5. During 2023, the theme for Ireland is 'The Picture of Health' and the call to men (and those who support the health of men) is what does the picture of health look like to you?
6. Men's Health Week is celebrated across Europe, the USA, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and in many other countries.
7. On the island of Ireland, Men's Health Week is coordinated by the Men's Health Forum in Ireland, with support from over 100 partner organisations.
8. The Men's Health Forum in Ireland ([www.mhfi.org](http://www.mhfi.org)) is a charity which works on an all-island basis to improve the health of men and boys. It is a voluntary network of individuals and organisations, men and women, which seeks to identify the key concerns relating to male health and to increase understanding of these issues.
9. Financial support for the week was received from Health Service Executive Health and Wellbeing, Healthy Ireland within the Department of Health, and the Public Health Agency.
10. Key information on Men's Health Week on the island of Ireland is available online ...
  - Full overview of Men's Health Week 2023: [www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2023.html](http://www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2023.html)
  - Men's Health Week posters and images: [www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-image-pack.html](http://www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-image-pack.html)

- Briefing paper which answers the most common questions about the week: [www.mhfi.org/mhw2023toolbox.pdf](http://www.mhfi.org/mhw2023toolbox.pdf)
  - Latest developments: [www.facebook.com/MensHealthWeek](https://www.facebook.com/MensHealthWeek) and [www.twitter.com/MensHealthIRL](https://www.twitter.com/MensHealthIRL)
11. Each day of Men's Health Week 2023 will focus upon a specific issue:
- Monday 12<sup>th</sup> June: Trash the ash
  - Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> June: Prevention is better than cure
  - Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> June: Food for thought
  - Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> June: Rethink what you drink - what do you depend on?
  - Friday 16<sup>th</sup> June: Mental fitness
  - Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> June: Let's get physical - be more than a sports spectator
  - Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> June: Father's Day - the important role that fathers play in their children's lives
12. 30,000 hard copies of the 'Action Man - ten top tips for men's health' Man Manual have been given out to men across the island of Ireland in the last two weeks. A PDF copy of the Man Manual can be accessed online at: <https://mhfi.org/ActionMan2023.pdf> Over 40,000 online copies of the booklet have also been downloaded to date.
13. The social media hashtags for the week are: #MensHealthWeek and #ThePictureOfHealth
14. There are four high profile 'Ambassadors' for Men's Health Week this year ...
- **David Gillick:** former Irish international 400m champion, winner of Celebrity MasterChef, contestant on RTE's 'Hell Week', author, sports correspondent and mental health advocate.
  - **Dr Mark Rowe:** family physician, Honorary Senior Lecturer at the RCSI School of Medicine and Health Sciences, author, podcaster, TedX Speaker and wellness expert.
  - **Gary (Spike) O'Sullivan:** champion Irish professional middle-weight boxer, sports columnist, actor, family man (and self-proclaimed Black Belt in Karaoke).
  - **Eoin Kernan:** star of the RTE documentary 'Unspoken' about men and body dysmorphia / eating disorders, an Ambassador for Bodywhys and water sports instructor.

