

**FREE
PLEASE TAKE
A COPY**



TOP TIPS FOR MEN'S HEALTH

ACTION MAN

WARNING

***READING THIS BOOKLET
COULD SERIOUSLY
IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH***

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The publication of this booklet has only been possible because of the generous support given by the Health Service Executive (HSE), Healthy Ireland within the Department of Health in the Republic of Ireland, the Public Health Agency (PHA) in Northern Ireland and the input of the two authors: Finian Murray (Senior Health Promotion and Improvement Officer, HSE) and Colin Fowler (Director of Operations, Men's Health Forum in Ireland).

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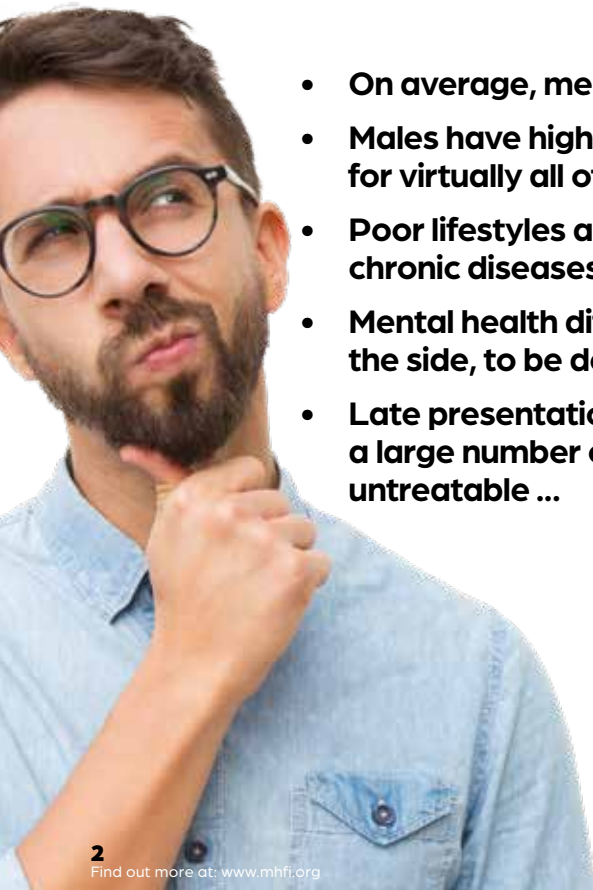
This booklet offers simple, realistic and practical tips to improve men's health. While every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this booklet is accurate, no liability is accepted by the authors for any errors, omissions or the effectiveness of any of the actions.

Please Note: This Man Manual is not a substitute for advice from a qualified medical practitioner. Such advice should always be sought for any symptom or illness which is causing concern.

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THIS MAN MANUAL IS FOR YOU



- On average, men die younger than women do.
- Males have higher death rates than females for virtually all of the leading causes of death.
- Poor lifestyles are responsible for many chronic diseases.
- Mental health difficulties are often pushed to the side, to be dealt with later.
- Late presentation to the doctor leads to a large number of problems becoming untreatable ...

If you don't believe this, then have a look at 'Men's Health in Numbers':
<https://www.mhfi.org/news/1096-men-s-health-in-numbers.html>

However, this is a 'Man Manual' which seeks to change this situation.

Some aspects of our health are determined by things which are beyond our control (such as genetics, our income, the environment that we live in and our access to services).

However, there are also **simple, practical** and **realistic** things which we can all do to improve our health and live a longer life.

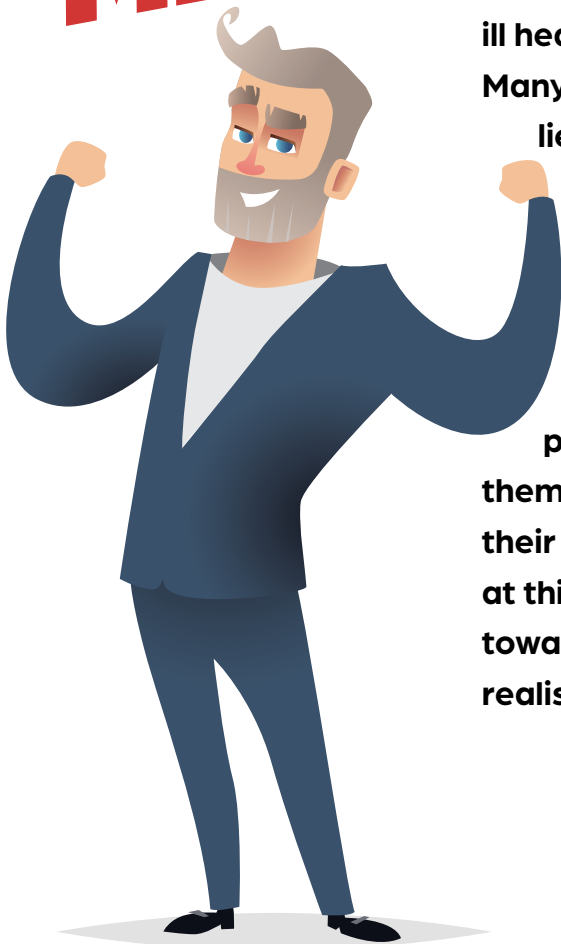
None of these are rocket science, and many are really just plain old straightforward **common sense**.

This booklet doesn't preach or lecture – it simply explains:

- 01 **WHY** an action is needed
- 02 **WHAT** can be done about it; and
- 03 **HOW** to find support if you need it.

Thus, the **ten top tips** put you into the driving seat, and give you the **tools** and **DIY instructions** to make **positive changes** – if you choose to be your own 'Action Man'.

WHY FOCUS ON MEN?



In a nutshell, men experience a disproportionate burden of ill health and die too young. Many of the reasons for this lie outside of the control of individual men, and need to be tackled at policy and service delivery levels. However, there are also lots of free, simple and practical things which men, themselves, can do to improve their situation. Having a look at this booklet is the first step towards making easy and realistic positive health changes.

There's no doubt that men get a lot of bad press when it comes to their health ...

- Some are criticised for taking too many risks and acting as if they are invincible.
- Many appear to take their health for granted and accept their lot.
- A number seem to ignore symptoms and signs of health problems until an easy fix is no longer possible.
- Others are reported as tending to let someone else look after their health needs.
- A large number of men think that they shouldn't waste the time of doctors and nurses with their 'minor complaints'.
- 'Man flu' has become the butt of many jokes.

But, the good news is that there are lots of things which can be done to change this situation.

Men, themselves, can play a key role in this, but they also need help, advice, guidance and support to do so. That is why we have produced this Man Manual.

By following even some of the ten top tips in this booklet you'll be more likely to live longer and to have a healthier and more enjoyable life. This is good for everyone – your family, friends, colleagues, community, country and, most of all, YOU!

Welcome to 'Action Man'. As it warns on the front cover:

'READING THIS BOOKLET COULD SERIOUSLY IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH!'

PLEASE REMEMBER. THIS BOOKLET IS NOT A NOVEL – YOU DON'T HAVE TO TRY TO READ IT ALL IN ONE SITTING

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

TOP TIP

Eat five to seven portions of fruit and vegetables a day, and try new varieties to ensure adequate nutrient intakes

Why healthy eating?

Most men eat too many foods which are high in fats, salt and sugar and too few vegetables, salads and fruit every day. This type of diet increases the risk of developing chronic diseases such as heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, some cancers and obesity – all of which increase the risk of premature death. To reduce your risk of chronic disease, one of the best things that you can do is to follow a healthier eating pattern that includes as wide a variety of foods as possible. Use the 'Food Pyramid' (opposite) as a guide.

Weight – weight gain can happen for many reasons, especially in our 20s and 30s. Being overweight (BMI ≥ 25) increases the risk of many chronic diseases including obesity. There are four key habits that can help: (i) eating healthily; (ii) being active; (iii) sleeping well; and (iv) managing stress. Visit <https://www.gov.ie/healthyweight> [Ro] or <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/healthy-lives/healthy-eating> [NI] to find out more.

Obesity – is a disease that occurs when excess body fat affects health, leading to increased risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, diabetes and certain cancers. Key health behaviours such as diet, physical activity, stress and sleep can affect weight. Taking steps to improve these will help your health, irrespective of your weight. To learn more, order the free booklet, 'Talking about Weight – a guide to developing healthier habits for life' from <https://www.healthpromotion.ie>



QUIZ TIME

Q1: One less savoury aspect of our gut is wind. But it is commonly held that men produce more offensive wind than women. Is this **true** or **false**?
[Answer on page 40]

What you can do

Food is fuel for the body. The 'Food Pyramid' can help you to see both what you need to eat and how much of it is necessary to ensure that you get all the energy and nutrients that you require. Plenty of variety is the key to getting the balance right.

Each 'shelf' (i.e. layer) of the Pyramid represents a different food group. You can see at a glance that most of our food should come from the vegetable / salad / fruit and the cereals / bread / potato / pasta / rice shelves. **Foods on the top two shelves should only be eaten in very small amounts** – as they are high in fat and sugar and have a high calorie, but low nutrient, content.

It is estimated that about 8 out of 10 men in Ireland don't eat enough fruit and vegetables. Choosing foods from the Pyramid in the amounts suggested, plus adding more vitamin D rich foods from October to March, will ensure that you eat a balanced diet. There's no rocket science here – it's that simple!

If you are concerned about your health and weight, speak to your GP or practice nurse about the treatment and weight management options available to you.

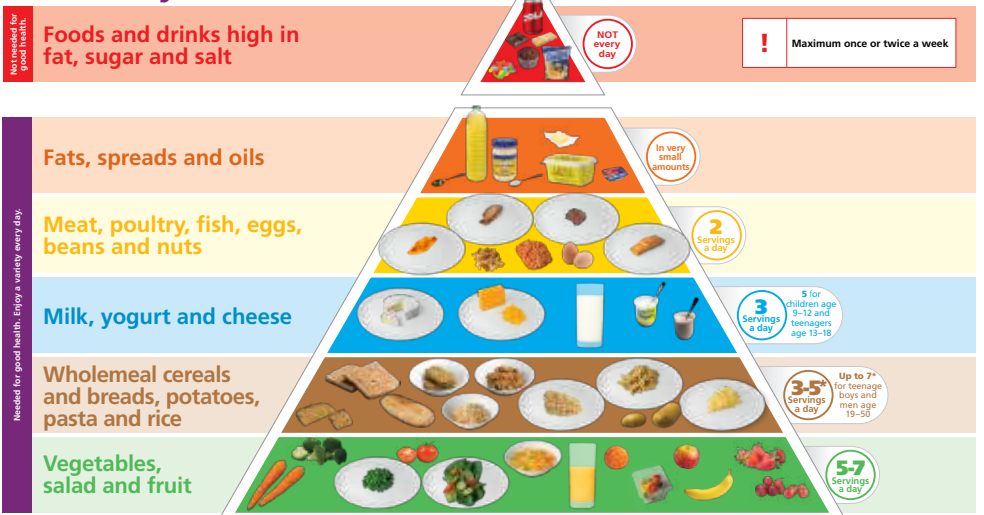
Healthy Food for Life

www.healthyireland.ie



The Food Pyramid

For adults, teenagers and children aged five and over



*Daily Servings Guide – wholemeal cereals and breads, potatoes, pasta and rice

Active	Child (5-12)	Teenager (13-18)	Adult (19-50)	Adult (51+)	Inactive	Teenager (13-18)	Adult (19-50)	Adult (51+)
	3-4	4	4-5	3-4		3	3-4	3
	3-5	5-7	5-7	4-5		4-5	4-6	4

There is no guideline for inactive children as it is essential that all children are active.

Drink at least 8 cups of fluid a day – water is best



Get Active!

To maintain a healthy weight adults need at least 30 minutes a day of moderate activity on 5 days a week (or 150 minutes a week); children need to be active at a moderate to vigorous level for at least 60 minutes every day.

Source: <https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-eat-well.html>



There are many benefits to eating a well-balanced diet. It can help to:

- Lower your cholesterol.
- Decrease your blood pressure.
- Reduce your risk of developing heart disease, diabetes and some cancers.
- Ensure you sleep better.
- Improve your energy levels.
- Achieve or maintain a healthy weight.
- Help you to feel better about yourself.
- Transform you into 'a bit of a catch' (well, maybe that's pushing it a bit far!).

The good news is that this is something you can have some control over. Be an 'Action Man' by:

- Eating less fatty and sugary foods.
- Eating a variety of vegetables, fruit and salad as well as potatoes, and choosing wholemeal varieties of bread, cereals, pasta and rice.
- Keeping the amount of fast foods and takeaways that you have to a minimum.
- Making your 'treats' just that – occasional special treats.
- Going easy on the salt shaker.
- Reducing the amount of processed foods that you eat (such as pies, bacon, ham, sausages, salami etc.).
- Eating more oily fish (e.g. salmon, herring, mackerel, sardines and trout).
- Drinking more water / pure fruit juices, and less sugar-sweetened drinks.

Find out more

Choose to Live Better

<https://www.choosetolivebetter.com>

Croi

<https://croi.ie/healthy-living/nutrition-diet>

Healthy Ireland – Eat Well

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/da7f19-eat-well>

Irish Heart Foundation

<https://irishheart.ie/how-to-keep-your-heart-healthy/healthy-eating>

Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute

<https://www.indi.ie/all-food-facts-and-fact-sheets.html>

NHS – Eat Well

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well>

NI Chest Heart and Stroke

<https://nichs.org.uk/information/risk-factors/diet>

NI Direct – Healthy Eating

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/healthy-lives/healthy-eating>

safefood

<https://www.safefood.net/healthy-eating>

TIP
02

LET'S GET PHYSICAL

TOP TIP

Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on at least five days a week (or 150 minutes a week)

Why should I get up, get out and get going?

Too many men in Ireland are not doing enough physical activity to ensure good health. Of course, there are many reasons for this, for example: the type of work that men do has changed over time; travelling by car and bus has replaced walking and cycling; often there is a conflict between balancing personal, work and family life; and as men get older many tend to stop doing sport when they feel that they can no longer take part competitively.

However, engaging in regular physical activity helps you to: get fit; achieve / maintain a healthy weight; improve your balance; reduce stress; improve your sleep patterns; build-up your bone and muscle strength; feel full of energy; lower your risk for many conditions – including heart disease, stroke, diabetes, some cancers, osteoporosis and depression. So, not only will you look better, you will feel better too.



RESTORING THE BALANCE

Q2: True or false? ... If your workout doesn't hurt, it's not effective - no pain no gain. [Answer on page 40]

What you can do

It's important to start easy and choose something that you enjoy doing, such as playing a sport, swimming, cycling or walking. You might not believe it, but the more exercise you do, the happier you will feel. That's because your body will release endorphins (hormones). These are the body's 'feel-good' chemicals which help to reduce stress, make you feel better and put you in a positive state of mind. How's that for a free 'magic remedy'?

Try to build as much physical activity into your day-to-day life as possible. This could include, for example...

- **Using the stairs instead of taking the lift or escalator.**
- **Leaving the car behind and walking to work (or getting off the bus / train a few stops early).**
- **If you have one, taking the dog out for a good long walk every day.**
- **Giving the garden or the shed or the yard a proper tidy-up.**
- **Getting stuck into those jobs around the house that have been on the 'long finger' for ages.**

Indeed, there is a 'free gym' almost everywhere around you, and the result is good for your health, your pocket and the environment!

All adults should aim for at least 30 minutes a day of moderate intensity activity on 5 days a week (or 150 minutes a week). This time can be added up throughout the day in short spurts - at least 10 minutes here and there will make a positive difference.

'Moderate intensity' means you should increase your heart rate a little, be sweating slightly, and experience an increase in breathing. As a guide, if you can still hold a conversation without too much difficulty, then you are at the right intensity. However, you may need to consult your GP before taking on any new strenuous exercise regime.

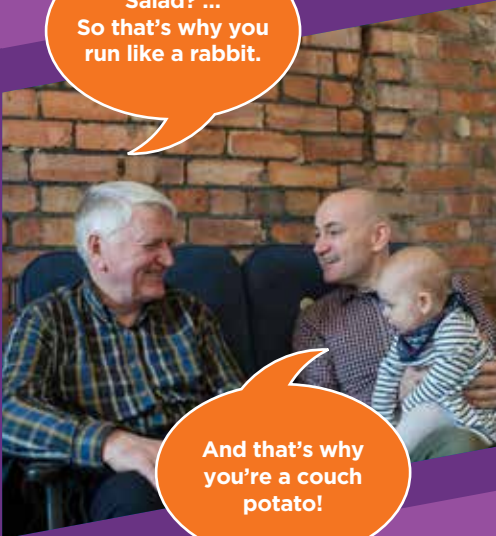
Older men (aged 65+) should focus on aerobic activity, muscle-strengthening and balance, whilst boys and young men (aged 2-18) should be active, at a moderate to vigorous level, for at least 60 minutes every day.

Heart disease is a major cause of death for men, but did you know that physical activity plus a good diet cuts the chance of heart disease by half?



I'm wrecked. It must be that pie and chips I had at lunch.

They said at work that too many chips are bad for you. They've a great selection of healthier foods and salads in the canteen now.



Salad? ... So that's why you run like a rabbit.

And that's why you're a couch potato!

Find out more

Age and Opportunity

<https://ageandopportunity.ie/active>

Choose to Live Better

<https://www.choosetolivebetter.com/content/getting-active>

Get Active Your Way

<https://www.mhfi.org/getactive.pdf>

Get Ireland Walking

<https://www.getirelandwalking.ie>

HSE – Exercise

<https://www2.hse.ie/living-well/exercise>

Irish Trails

<https://www.irishtrails.ie>

NHS – Exercise

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise>

NI Direct – Physical Activity

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/physical-activity>

Out More NI

<https://outmoreni.com>

parkrun

<https://www.parkrun.ie>

KEEP A CLEAR HEAD

Why is mind fitness important?

The mental health of men and boys in Ireland is often poor, and something needs to be done about it. Unfortunately, this is borne out in the figures for suicide each year – where males account for approximately 75% of all deaths.

But when you hear the words ‘mental health’ what immediately jumps into your mind? ... For some reason, many men and boys seem to totally miss the word ‘health’ and, instead, replace it with ‘illness’. This, in turn, leads to a confusion between mental health (which everyone has and needs to attend to on an ongoing basis) with mental illness (a condition which may require medical treatment). For many men, this can be a reason to quickly change the conversation to another topic!

Yet, most men can easily link the words ‘health’ and ‘fitness’. Fitness is something that you can control, improve over time and see the tangible benefits of. It is also associated with things such as overcoming adversity, performing to the best of your ability, proving endurance, demonstrating strength of character etc. This is solid ground for many men.

So, in the future, let’s think about our ‘mental health’ in terms of ‘mind fitness’ i.e. something that will go up and down, change over time and (most importantly) something that we can exercise a degree of control over – if we choose to.

TOP TIP

Discuss any problems that you have - as early as possible - with someone that you trust

ENJOY THE LITTLE THINGS

QUIZ TIME

Q3: What should you say to a friend who you think / know is suffering from depression? ...

- a) Just think happy thoughts.
- b) I don't understand why you have to be so sad about things.
- c) You just need to snap out of this and everything will be OK.
- d) Do you want to talk about it? I'm here when you're ready.
- e) Get real - there's tons of people out there who are worse off than you.

[Answer on page 40]

What you can do

We all have demands placed upon us that can impact our mind fitness. These can come from family, work, deadlines, relationships, financial pressures ... the list is virtually endless. We also all have to deal with life changes such as moving house, new jobs, getting married / separated, having children, coping with the death of a loved one etc. Problems arise when pressures or demands exceed our capacity to cope.

Having positive mind fitness enables a person to think, act and feel in ways that can help them to enjoy life and cope with daily challenges. Of course, there will be times when everyone will feel sad, anxious or stressed. These are normal responses to difficult situations. But if these feelings become persistent – and interfere with our ability to function and enjoy daily life – we can develop poor mental wellbeing.

How we cope with the demands of life will vary for all of us, depending on how we were brought up, how we think about things, our personality, our previous experiences and the support available to us. The signs of stress are very varied and can include feeling tense or useless, anxiety, tiredness, forgetfulness, poor concentration, mood swings, irritability, indigestion, headaches, back pain, eating too much / little, drinking more alcohol than usual, sleeping less / more and becoming withdrawn.

It is impossible for us to eliminate all the sources of stress in our lives. Instead, we should try to: (i) avoid it if possible; (ii) recognise the signs when it is happening; (iii) take measures to reduce it; and (iv) develop practical ways to help us to cope better with it.

So, what can we do to strengthen our mind fitness? Well, to be honest, the top tips are (as in many parts of this booklet) more common sense than rocket science. For example, if you're feeling stressed, you could:

- **Take time out** – if you can, try to get away from the cause of the stressful situation, even for a short period.
- **Work off the stress** – physical activity helps to produce the body's own 'happy hormones' called endorphins. These give us the feel-good factor we experience after exercise. Try to be more active every day – walk briskly, cycle, jog, swim or enjoy another physical activity that you like doing.
- **Talk to someone that you trust** – it can be easy to underestimate the value of talking to friends and family.
- **Learn to accept what you cannot change** – know that, at times, you simply have to let some things go.
- **Get enough rest and sleep** – to recharge your batteries.

- **Manage your time better** – learn to prioritise, concentrate on one thing at a time, make realistic lists, and give yourself a pat on the back for getting through tasks.
- **Use the dietary guidelines (on page 7) to achieve a healthy balanced diet** – eat plenty of fruit and vegetables every day and less fatty / sugary foods to give you more energy and stamina.
- **Drink plenty of water** – it'll rehydrate your brain and help you to think more clearly.
- **Avoid nicotine, excessive caffeine, drugs and alcohol** – as these will only impair your ability to think and act.
- **Practice deep breathing and relaxation techniques** – it might sound a bit 'touchy-feely', but it has been proven to work.
- **Discuss any worrying or persistent symptoms with your GP.**



IT'S TIME FOR A NEW SCRIPT

Find out more

If you're worried about any mental health issue, talk with a health professional (your GP or practice nurse) for expert advice and support.

If you need urgent assistance, contact ...

Lifeline [NI]

Freephone: 0808 808 8000

<https://www.lifelinehelpline.info>

Pieta Helpline [RoI]

Freephone: 1800 247 247

<https://www.pieta.ie/how-we-can-help/helpline/>

The Samaritans [RoI and NI]

Freephone: 116 123

<https://www.samaritans.org>

For advice on improving your mind fitness, visit ...

Five Ways to Wellbeing

<https://www.mentalhealthireland.ie/five-ways-to-wellbeing>

Mental Health Ireland

<https://www.mentalhealthireland.ie/resources>

Minding Your Head

<https://www.mindingyourhead.info/resources>

National Office for Suicide Prevention [RoI]

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/mental-health-services/nosp>

NHS – Mental Health

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health>

NI Direct – Mental Health

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/healthy-lives/mental-health>

Your Mental Health [RoI]

<https://www.yourmentalhealth.ie>

Your Mind Plan

<https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/mental-wellbeing-tips/your-mind-plan-quiz>

“

LIGHTEN THE LOAD...



...HAVE THE CONVERSATION

”

TIP
04

GOING UP IN SMOKE

TOP TIP
Start the journey towards
quitting smoking today -
visit www.quit.ie
or
www.stopsmokingni.info

Why stop smoking?

The answer to this question is really quite simple: smoking is the leading cause of preventable death on the island of Ireland - with an estimated 7,500 people dying each year from tobacco related diseases. It harms nearly every organ in the human body and is a risk factor for developing many chronic diseases.

Most people already know that smoking causes lung cancer. However, it can also lead to other serious health problems including heart disease, stroke, bronchitis, emphysema, a number of other cancers (such as mouth, throat and bowel), diabetes, osteoporosis (brittle bones), and even impotence and infertility! It's also worrying that smoking can have harmful effects upon those around you.

In Ireland, more men smoke than women and they begin smoking at a younger age. But more and more men are giving it up every day. This is great news because, if you smoke, you are twice as likely to die prematurely.



Giving up smoking is the single best thing that you can do to improve your health. Most importantly, when you stop, the benefits begin from day one.

Did you know that after ...

- 20 minutes – heart rate and blood pressure will start to fall.
- 8 hours – oxygen levels begin to return to normal.
- 48 hours – taste and smell improve, and the body is nicotine-free.
- 72 hours – breathing is easier and energy levels improve.
- 4 to 12 weeks – erections and sperm count are stronger.
- 12 weeks – blood circulation is improved and physical activity becomes a lot easier.
- 1 year – heart and lungs are healthier and function better.
- 10 years – the risk of lung cancer is halved.
- 15 years – you will be able to afford that new car you always dreamed about.
- 20 years – the risk of death from heart attack and stroke drops to the level of a person who has never smoked in their life.

Alongside these benefits, you will:

- have more cash to spend on the things that you'd really like;
- smell fresher, and have gotten rid of bad breath and stained fingers / teeth;
- be able to climb the stairs, run for the bus, play with the kids, kick a ball with your mates ... without being out of breath;
- have freed yourself from the worry that you might be killing yourself;
- live a longer and healthier life for those that you care about.

QUIZ TIME

Q4: Approximately how many chemicals are there in tobacco smoke? ...
(a) 1,000, (b) 4,000 or (c) 8,000
[Answer on page 40]

What you can do

No one is saying that quitting smoking is easy, but it certainly can be done. Some people might need to try several times before they make it. So remember: if at first you don't succeed, try and try again.

If you're thinking about quitting, try to:

1. Be clear about your reasons for doing it.
2. Set a date to quit.
3. Get support from your family, friends and colleagues and don't try to keep it a secret.
4. Change your routine and plan ahead for those times during the day when you used to smoke.
5. Exercise to burn off energy and improve your physical and mental health.
6. Think positively – you're gaining a new lease of life and improving your health.
7. Learn to deal with cravings. Follow the 4 D's:
 - Delay at least 3–5 minutes and the urge will pass.
 - Drink a glass of water or fruit juice.
 - Distract yourself and move away from the situation.
 - Deep breaths – breathe slowly and deeply.
8. Save the money you would normally spend on cigarettes and see the financial benefit at the end of the week / month.
9. Snack on fruit, chew sugar-free gum and drink plenty of water (rather than bingeing on biscuits, chocolate and fizzy drinks).
10. Take one day at a time – every day without a cigarette is good for your health, your family and your wallet.

[Taken from the HSE's 'We Can Quit' programme]

THE FIRST FEW DAYS, WHEN NICOTINE WITHDRAWAL OCCURS, CAN BE THE MOST CHALLENGING, HOWEVER, IF YOU CAN GET THROUGH THIS, YOU'RE WELL ON THE ROAD TO LONG-TERM SUCCESS.



You're looking well John. What've you been up to then?

Cheers. I feel great. We've just got back from Florida.

But you smoke about thirty a day.



Naah - just quit the smokes. Saved me money for a few months.

Oh yeah - win the Lottery did you?



Used to, Dave, but I've given up. Careful now - you could catch your death out there.

Find out more

Cancer Focus NI

<https://cancerfocusni.org/cancer-prevention/smoking>

HSE Quit

<https://www.quit.ie>
Freephone: 1800 201 203
Email: support@quit.ie
Freetext: QUIT to 50100

Irish Cancer Society

<https://www.cancer.ie/cancer-information-and-support/cancer-prevention/smoking>

Marie Keating Foundation

<https://www.mariekeating.ie/smoking-the-facts>

NHS - Quit Smoking

<https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking>

Stop Smoking NI

<https://www.stopsmokingni.info>

TIP
05

IT'S YOUR SHOUT

TOP TIP

With alcohol, less is
always more

Why do we need to think about what we drink?

Many men in Ireland enjoy a drink with their friends. However, it is estimated that (according to Rol data from the Revenue in 2021) the current intake of pure alcohol per person aged 15+ is approximately 10.1 litres per year. This is the equivalent of 36 x 700ml bottles of vodka (40% Alcohol by Volume – ABV), or 108 x 750ml bottles of wine (12.5% ABV), or 413 pints of beer (4.3% ABV) per person per annum. This figure is very high in relation to other countries. Indeed, since it is estimated that almost a quarter of people in Ireland do not drink at all, this implies that those who do drink are exceeding this figure.

The World Health Organisation has highlighted that the harmful use of alcohol is a causal factor in more than 200 disease and injury conditions. But the harm which excessive alcohol use causes is not only felt by the person who is drinking it. Such alcohol consumption can have an impact upon the person's wider family and friends, and there is also a cost to society (which runs to billions) for alcohol-related medical treatment, crime, lost working hours, judicial proceedings, road traffic accidents, assaults, public order offences and debt problems. Worst of all, is the fact that there are 4–5 deaths every day on the island of Ireland which are directly attributable to alcohol – with the majority of these people being male. Indeed, there are almost twice as many deaths due to alcohol in Ireland as due to all other drugs combined.

With alcohol, the simple message is 'less is more' – you'll have more healthy years of life, more money, and more time to do things if you cut back on the drink.

IF YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT YOUR DRINKING, THE BEST PLACE TO START FINDING HELP IS TO CONTACT YOUR GP. THEY CAN ASSESS YOUR PHYSICAL HEALTH AND PUT YOU IN TOUCH WITH LOCAL SUPPORT SERVICES.

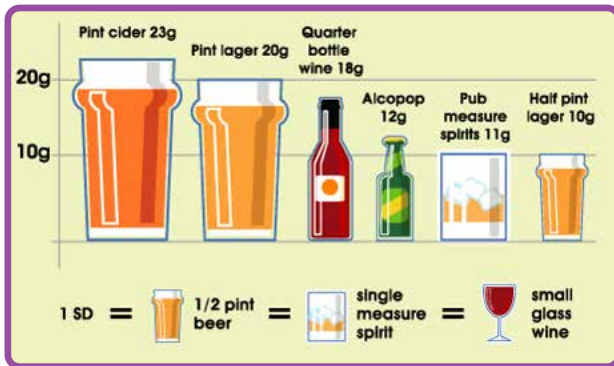
What you can do

There is no level of drinking that can be called 'safe' for all people at all times. Indeed, for some people, 'safe drinking' may mean not drinking at all. However, it's crystal clear that you should never drink at all if your doctor advises you not to and/or if you are going to drive, operate machinery, play a sport or take certain medications.

There are differences between how the amount of alcohol in a drink is calculated in the Republic of Ireland (RoI) and Northern Ireland (NI). RoI government guidelines state that men should have less than 17 'standard drinks' a week (with each standard drink containing 10g of pure alcohol), while NI guidelines recommend that everyone should have no more than 14 units per week (with each unit being 10ml – about 8g – of pure alcohol). Importantly, these drinks should be spread out over the week, and it is also recommended that everyone should have at least two alcohol-free days per week.

It might surprise you that in RoI, for example, a standard drink is about: half a pint of ordinary strength lager; a single measure of spirits in the pub; a very small glass of wine (12.5% ABV); or an alcopop (275ml bottle).

But here's something that's really worth remembering – your liver can only break down around one unit of alcohol per hour.



QUIZ TIME

- Q5:** How long does it take for the brain to start to react to alcohol? ...
- (a) 6 minutes,
 - (b) 60 minutes or
 - (c) 6 hours
- [Answer on page 40]

Republic of Ireland




Northern Ireland

Drinking more than six standard drinks / eight units on any one occasion is classified as 'binge drinking' for men. Binge drinking is known to lead to an increased risk of violence, difficulties at work, unprotected sex, risk-taking and accidents. Furthermore, some alcoholic drinks are also high in calories – so, if you are trying to get rid of your beer belly, you may want to cut back on the amount of alcohol that you are consuming.

If you do drink, and want to reduce the harmful effects of it, here are some simple actions you can take ...

- ***BUY LESS ALCOHOL TO KEEP IN THE HOUSE - IF IT'S NOT THERE, YOU CAN'T HAVE IT.***
- ***USE SMALLER GLASSES WHEN YOU'RE DRINKING AT HOME - THE BIGGER THE GLASS, THE MORE LIKELY YOU ARE TO FILL IT.***
- ***CUT DOWN THE STRENGTH OF YOUR DRINKS - SWITCH TO A LOWER ABV VERSION OF WHAT YOU LIKE.***
- ***DRINK PLENTY OF WATER BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER THE PUB - THIS WILL KEEP YOU FROM FEELING THIRSTY.***
- ***EAT FIRST AND DRINK LATER - SINCE YOUR STOMACH CAN ONLY HOLD SO MUCH, THIS WILL HELP TO FILL YOU UP QUICKER.***
- ***WALK TO THE PUB - IT'LL CUT DOWN ON A BIT OF DRINKING TIME AND BURN OFF SOME CALORIES ALONG THE WAY.***
- ***STAY AWAY FROM 'ROUNDS' IN THE PUB.***
- ***TRY AN ALCOHOL-FREE BEER / WINE / COCKTAIL NOW AND AGAIN - YOU MIGHT ACTUALLY LIKE IT.***
- ***ENSURE THAT YOU HAVE SOME ALCOHOL-FREE DAYS EACH WEEK.***



Did you see the state of Pete last night?

I reckon he'd had a few too many.

I bet she was pleased.

Yeah - he made a right show of himself. We had to call Debbie to take him home.

Not at all ... but it's the boss Pete needs to worry about. He called in sick again today. Apparently, he's been told he's drinking in the last chance saloon.

Find out more

Alcohol Action Ireland

<https://alcoholireland.ie>

Alcoholics Anonymous

<https://www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie>

Ask about Alcohol – HSE

<https://www2.hse.ie/living-well/alcohol>

Drugs and Alcohol NI

<https://drugsandalcoholni.info>

HSE Drugs and Alcohol Helpline

Freephone: 1800 459 459

Minding Your Head

<https://www.mindingyourhead.info/topic/alcohol>

NI Direct – Alcohol and Drugs

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/taxonomy/term/708>

Spunout

<https://spunout.ie/category/health/alcohol>

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Why is heart health so important?

The heart is a muscular organ – about the size of a fist – which is part of the cardiovascular system (comprised of the heart, blood and blood vessels such as arteries, veins and capillaries). Its main job is to pump blood to all parts of the body. This blood carries the oxygen and nutrients that body organs need to work properly. It also carries harmful carbon dioxide to the lungs so that it can be breathed out.

The heart has an electrical system which controls the rate and rhythm of the heartbeat. A healthy heart will supply the body with the right amount of blood, at the best rate, for it to work well. However, if disease or injury weakens the heart – or there is a problem with the electrical system – the body's organs will not receive enough blood to work properly.

It is estimated that seven out of eight males have at least one risk factor for Coronary Heart Disease (CHD) and stroke. Some of these risk factors are outside of our control (e.g. being male, having a family history of heart disease, our ethnicity or being older). However, there are also some that we can do something about (e.g. diet, smoking, stress, weight, sleep and lifestyle). This is important, because a forty year-old male smoker, with raised blood pressure and high cholesterol, has up to a 40% chance of a heart attack in the next ten years. On the other hand, his non-smoking male friend of the same age, with normal blood pressure and cholesterol, has a risk of only 5-10%.

TOP TIP

Make sure that you have regular check-ups for cholesterol and blood pressure – especially when you get older and/or if there is any family history of heart disease



QUIZ TIME

Q6: Men and women have been found to have different heart rates. Whose heart beats faster? [Answer on page 40]

What you can do

Everyone can do something to reduce their risk of CHD and stroke ...

- **Stop smoking** – as smoking can cause reduced blood flow in the arteries, which can lead to heart disease or stroke.
- **Cut down on the booze** – to help achieve a healthy weight and reduce your risk of atrial fibrillation (irregular heartbeat) issues.
- **Watch your weight** – since being overweight can lead to a build-up of a fatty material in your arteries. This increases the risk of high blood pressure and cholesterol, and could lead to a heart attack or stroke.
- **Eat better** – cut down on fatty / salty foods to help to lower your cholesterol, reduce the size of food portions that you have, eat more fruit and vegetables, and limit the amount of sugar-sweetened drinks that you consume.
- **Move more** – to reduce stress, improve your sense of wellbeing and help maintain a healthy weight.
- **Get enough sleep** – to improve your brain function, mental health and ability to make positive choices, as well as reduce the risk of diabetes (which can impact heart health).
- **Walk away from stress if you can** – as exposure to long-term stress can lead to high blood pressure, weight gain and mental health difficulties.
- **Get checked regularly** – to test your blood pressure and cholesterol level (especially as you get older and/or if there is a history of heart disease at an early age among your close relatives). Prevention is always better than cure.
- **Don't ignore the body's early warning signs** – if in doubt, check it out. Your GP would always prefer to speak with you sitting down in their surgery rather than lying down on a hospital bed!

Find out more

Blood Pressure UK

<https://www.bloodpressureuk.org/your-blood-pressure>

Croí

<https://croi.ie>

Irish Heart Foundation

<https://irishheart.ie/how-to-keep-your-heart-healthy>

Man's Guide to Heart Health [Irish Heart Foundation]

<https://irishheart.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/AMansGuideToHealth.pdf>

NI Chest, Heart and Stroke

<https://nichs.org.uk>

NI Direct – Salt

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/salt>

TAKE ACTION IF YOU EXPERIENCE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

- UNCOMFORTABLE PRESSURE, DISCOMFORT, SQUEEZING OR PAIN IN THE CENTRE OF THE CHEST WHICH LASTS FOR MORE THAN A FEW MINUTES OR COMES AND GOES,
- THE CHEST PAIN SPREADS TO THE BACK, NECK, ARM(S), JAW OR STOMACH,
- LIGHT-HEADEDNESS, SWEATING, NAUSEA, VOMITING OR SHORTNESS OF BREATH,

NOT ALL OF THESE SIGNS OCCUR IN EVERY HEART ATTACK, HOWEVER, EVEN IF YOU'RE NOT SURE, DON'T WAIT – ALWAYS SEEK HELP FAST.

TIP
07

HAVE A HEALTHY SEX LIFE

TOP TIP

No 'ifs' or 'buts' -
just practise safer sex

Why do we need a healthy sex life?

In the 'Challenges and Choices' Man Manual [<https://www.mhfi.org/challenges2022.pdf>], Dr Ian Banks reminds us that '*chlamydia isn't a Greek island - it's actually Ireland's most common sexually transmitted infection*'. This is a timely reminder, as there is a popular myth that men think about sex every seven seconds! However, at the same time, they probably spend a lot less time thinking about protecting their own, and their partner's, sexual health.

Sexual and reproductive health is an important part of our overall health. While it obviously refers to the prevention of infections, it also covers: giving and seeking consent to sexual activity; our ability to have children (if we choose to); being proactive about contraception; and the ability to have pleasurable and safer sexual relationships. Thus, it's about much more than just condoms and the pill.




What you can do

- **Have a chat** – Talk to your partner about what you each want in terms of sexual activity and about safer sex and contraception use. This will help each party to feel safe and may open up some new doors to sexual enjoyment.
- **Practise safer sex** – Learning about and understanding how sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are passed on from one person to another will enable you to make safer choices around sexual activity. STIs can be passed on from various types of sexual contact and many STIs have no symptoms.
- **Use a condom** – Proper use of a good quality (new and in date) condom will significantly reduce the risk of STIs and unplanned pregnancy. If there is a risk of pregnancy, you and your partner should discuss the use of an additional contraception method along with a condom. If you change your sexual partners or have casual sex, it is especially important to use condoms consistently and correctly. However, be aware that condoms do not offer total protection, so it's important to get tested for STIs in addition to using condoms.
- **Watch out for changes** – Symptoms of STIs may include: unusual discharge from the penis; pain or a burning feeling when passing urine; unusual sores, blisters or warts around the genitals or the anus; swelling in the testicles; itching, redness or irritation around the penis or foreskin; and pain during intercourse. However, many people have no symptoms at all and may not know if they have an STI.
- **Get over it and get tested** – STIs can affect anyone, of any age, of any sexual orientation, in any type of a relationship. If you think you may have an STI, visit your GP, pharmacist or an STI clinic for professional advice. If you do not have any symptoms, you can do a free home STI test. Visit <https://sexualwellbeing.ie> [RoI] or <https://www.sexualhealthni.info/online-testing> [NI] to order a test kit. Your partner may benefit from testing too. While you might be embarrassed to think that you have an STI, rest assured – the tester will have seen and heard it all before.
- **Don't be shy** – There are many types of sexual dysfunction experienced by men, and men experiencing any of these should talk to their GP as soon as possible. The main types are: erectile dysfunction / impotence (difficulty getting and/or keeping an erection); premature ejaculation (reaching orgasm too quickly); delayed or inhibited ejaculation (reaching orgasm too slowly or not at all); and low libido (reduced interest in sex). Most men will experience one or more of these '*embarrassing issues*' at some point in their lives. However, these conditions can be caused by a range of things, such as depression, stress, relationship problems, financial worries, smoking, too much alcohol or physical health issues such as diabetes. The good news is that they can often be treated successfully and help is available for these problems. However, you have to be prepared to take it.


QUIZ TIME

Q7: True or false? ... The bigger a man's shoe size, the larger his penis.
[Answer on page 40]



You've got a real twinkle in your eye these days Jack. What's your secret then?

My wife's put me on a new regime - I've cut out the smokes and I've lost a spare tyre or two. I've got all my old stamina back - she's delighted.



Rubbish - I feel ten years younger. You're just jealous!

You should know when to stop old man.

Find out more

Gay Men's Health Service

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/5/sexhealth/gmhs>

HIV Ireland

<https://www.hivireland.ie>

Irish Family Planning Association

<https://www.ifpa.ie>

Man2Man

<https://man2man.ie>

NI Direct – Sexual Health

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/sexual-health>

Sexual Health NI

<https://www.sexualhealthni.info>

Sexual Health [RoI]

<https://www.sexualwellbeing.ie/sexual-health>

Spun Out

<https://spunout.ie/category/sex-relationships>

The Rainbow Project

<https://www.rainbow-project.org/sexual-health>

CHECK YOUR BITS AND BOBS

Why is cancer awareness crucial?

'Cancer' is a word that strikes fear into most men and, for many, it is seen as a death sentence. This is not surprising, as it is estimated that one in two men in Ireland will develop it during their lifetime. But, there is also a lot of fake news and misinformation out there, and the nature of some cancers – such as testicular, prostate or bowel – may cause embarrassment for men and prevent them from coming forward for examination.

However, here is some great news ...

1. We now know that **some cancers can be prevented**. For example, lung cancer is mostly caused by smoking, while too much sun exposure causes approximately 90% of skin cancers. Thus, by simply adopting a healthier lifestyle, we can help to reduce the risk of getting a range of cancers.
2. **Cancer treatments have improved dramatically**. Indeed, when most cancers are spotted early, there's a good chance that you will be cured or that the treatment will control the cancer for a long time. For example, nine out of every ten men survive prostate and testicular cancers when they are caught early. So, the earlier most cancers are detected, the better chance there is of a good recovery.



TOP TIP

Know what is normal for your body - as this will help you to identify symptoms that need to be checked out by a doctor

What you can do

Did you know that as many as four out of ten cancers can be prevented by having a healthier lifestyle and avoiding risk factors? There are a number of simple and practical steps that every man can take to reduce their cancer risk. These include ...

- **Don't smoke** – cutting out cigarettes will dramatically cut your risk of cancer.
- **Ensure your home and workplace is smoke free** – second hand smoke increases the risk of lung cancer and heart disease for non-smokers.
- **Watch your weight** – an increase in body fat can lead to an increased risk of some cancers.
- **Move more** – sit less.
- **Eat healthily** – include plenty of wholegrains, pulses, vegetables and fruits in your diet, and limit sugary or fatty foods / drinks, processed meat, salt and red meat.
- **If you drink alcohol, cut back** – but not drinking at all is better for cancer prevention.
- **Avoid too much sun** – use sun protection and always stay away from sunbeds.
- **Be careful when working with chemicals and substances such as asbestos** – always follow health and safety instructions and wear appropriate protective clothing.
- **Find out if you are exposed to radiation and, if so, take action** – especially from high radon levels in your home.
- **Participate** in cancer screening programmes.
- **Know the signs of cancer and check for changes in your body** – this awareness could save your life.
- **Act quickly** – if you notice anything unusual or you're worried about your health.

QUIZ TIME

Q8: True or false? ... Most cancers are inherited, so there's nothing I can do.
[Answer on page 40]

THE MESSAGE IS CLEAR AND STRAIGHTFORWARD IF IN DOUBT, CHECK IT OUT

as you're more likely to survive cancer if you spot it early. However, different types of cancer have different symptoms. If you notice any of the following, contact your GP as soon as possible ...

- A new lump, bump or swelling anywhere on your body, or a sore that doesn't heal (including inside your mouth).
- Skin changes, such as a new mole or changes in the colour, shape and size of existing moles.
- Unexplained bleeding and/or coughing-up blood (including traces of blood in pee or poo).
- Sudden weight loss which is not related to dieting.
- Constantly feeling tired / exhausted / worn out.
- A cough that lasts for more than three weeks or changes in your voice and feeling short of breath.
- Changes in your bowel or bladder habits, such as prolonged constipation, diarrhoea or problems passing urine.
- Difficulty swallowing, or persistent indigestion, heartburn or a feeling of being bloated.
- Pain that doesn't go away.

If you notice a change, the chances are that it will not be cancer. However, getting it checked is never a waste of anyone's time – and it could save your life. There's also no need to be embarrassed about that 'personal issue' – your doctor will have been there / seen it / done it all before!

Find out more

Action Cancer

<https://actioncancer.org/info-hub>

Bowel Screening

<https://www.bowelscreen.ie> [RoI]

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/bowel-screening> [NI]

Care in the Sun

<https://careinthesun.org>

Irish Cancer Society

<https://www.cancer.ie/cancer-information-and-support/cancer-prevention/mens-health>

Marie Keating Foundation

<https://www.mariekeating.ie/get-men-talking>

Radon Testing


<https://www.epa.ie/environment-and-you/radon>

Spot Cancer Early and Reduce Your Risk: Manual for Men (Irish Cancer Society)

<https://tinyurl.com/25kn9jrp>

SunSmart

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/5/cancer/prevention/skin-cancer-prevention-sunsmart.html>




I see Bill's back.
Has he been on
holiday?



Some holiday -
he's been having
treatment for
cancer.



Cancer?
No way - he
doesn't look ill.



Yeah - they caught it early.
Bill found a lump and went to his
doctor right away. The doctor
sent him straight to hospital. He
was lucky. If he hadn't seen to it
early, it could have been a whole
different story.

GET CONNECTED

Why do men need to get connected?

Humans are, for the most part, social beings who have evolved to live in groups rather than on their own. Thus, it is no surprise that feeling connected to family, partners, friends, neighbours, work colleagues and communities is a crucial part of helping men (and, indeed, everyone) to have a sense of being wanted, needed, included, useful and valued.

Everyone needs these social connections to thrive and survive. However, being alone can leave men vulnerable to both loneliness and social isolation. Put simply, loneliness is the unwelcome feeling of being out on your own and separated from other people; while social isolation is when you lack regular contact and interaction with other people and, very importantly, the support and help that they can offer to you.

Research clearly shows that this, in turn, is associated with a wide range of health issues such as depression, obesity, high blood pressure, weak immune system, heart disease, sleep problems, dementia and even premature death.



TOP TIP

Get out there and start to re-build your relationships and connections. If these are already in place, continue to nurture them.

What you can do

There are many ways that men can end up feeling lonely and isolated:

- Changes in Ireland's farming communities have left some men living on their own in rural areas.
- Working shift patterns means that it can be hard to maintain relationships and socialise with family and friends.
- Losing a job may not only cut ties with work colleagues, but can mean less money to go out and socialise with friends.
- After separation from their partners (such as through a relationship break-up or death), men may lose contact with their children or find that the only person they truly confided in is now gone.
- Some men may feel ostracised from their community because of their sexual identity.
- Acting as a long-term carer can cut off men's links to the wider world.
- Men who are new arrivals in a town or city often feel like / are treated like outsiders.
- Chronic illness can reduce a man's ability to maintain connections.
- Many men in Ireland have, traditionally, been brought up to think that they should produce, provide, be self-sufficient and not seek help. This can mean that they have lots of acquaintances, but very few real friends that they can rely on ...

So, the reasons are numerous, but the key message is simple – isolation and loneliness is becoming an increasingly common experience for many people in Ireland and, especially, for men and older people. Therefore, it's definitely time to get out there and start to re-build those relationships and connections.

QUIZ TIME

Q9: What percentage of employers would hire someone with volunteering experience over someone who has never volunteered ... 30%, 50%, 70% or 90%? [Answer on page 40]

HERE'S SOME PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS TO GET YOU STARTED ...

- Enrol in an adult hobby, language or education class which is just starting – everyone will be a stranger at the first session, so you won't feel out of place.
- Re-visit a previous hobby or interest that you had, which involves doing things collectively with other people (e.g. being part of a band, acting, playing bridge, membership of a cycling club or a walking group).
- Play a team sport – depending upon your level of fitness. There's something for everyone such as football, hurling, tennis, soccer, badminton, touch rugby, danderball, tug-of-war, bowling, tiddlywinks etc.
- Join a quiz team or start your own.
- Put your time and skills to use by volunteering in a local charity shop or community project.
- Be a hero and, if you know someone who may be at risk of isolation, drop in, or give them a ring, or find a reason to strike up a conversation with them. Then help them to make the first move and bring them along to a local activity.
- Join a men's group, or a local Men's Shed ...

... the sky's the limit, and not only will you re-connect with the world around you, but you might have fun, learn something new, gain a sense of satisfaction, achieve something, increase your confidence, learn a new skill, feel useful and make some friends. Now that really is a WIN-WIN situation!

Find out more

Active Ireland: Volunteering Opportunities [RoI]

<https://www.activelink.ie/community-exchange/volunteering>

Adult Education Ireland [RoI]

<https://www.adulteducationireland.ie>

Becoming a Volunteer [NI]

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/becoming-volunteer>

Further Education Colleges in Northern Ireland

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/further-education-fe-colleges>

Irish Men's Sheds Association

<https://menssheds.ie>

I-VOL: The National Volunteering Database [RoI]

<https://www.i-vol.ie>

Men's Action Network [NI]

<https://www.man-ni.org>

Men's Development Network [RoI]

<https://mensnetwork.ie>

Night Courses [RoI]

<https://www.nightcourses.com>

Volunteer Ireland [RoI]

<https://www.volunteer.ie>

Volunteer Now [NI]

<https://www.volunteernow.co.uk/volunteering>

TIP
10

LET'S NOT MEET BY ACCIDENT

TOP TIP

Be an Action Man - having a knowledge of First Aid can save a life

Why do we need to be concerned about men and accidents?

The number of males in Ireland who die or are injured as a result of accidents is staggering ...

- Farming is one of the most dangerous occupations in Ireland. Indeed, fatalities on farms account for nearly half of all fatal workplace incidents in Ireland. This is surprising, as farmers only represent 6% of the total workforce.
- Injury on the road is a leading cause of death for young men.
- Men are the group that are most likely to have an accident or be killed in the workplace - often due to the nature of the dangerous occupations (such as construction, mining, fishing) that they work in.
- Males suffer greater injuries as a result of contact sports.
- Almost two thirds of those who die in house fires are men who live alone, in basic accommodation, without a working smoke alarm ...



QUIZ
TIME

Q10: True or false? ... Three times as many men die in car crashes as women. [Answer on page 40]

What you can do

However, this is not a lost cause, and there are a range of things which men, themselves, can do to take more control of this situation. Here are a few examples:

ON THE ROAD



- Excessive speed is the number one cause of road accidents, so ease your foot off the pedal.
- Drinking and driving don't mix. Therefore, keep drink out of the driving seat.
- Wear a seat belt at all times – in both the front and back seats.
- Be seen and be safe when you're a pedestrian. Where there is no footpath: walk on the right hand side of the road; face the on-coming traffic; wear reflective clothing; carry a torch; and be aware of your surroundings at all times.
- Cyclists need to: give clear hand signals; wear a helmet and luminous jacket; avoid riding in the blind-spots of other road users; and have a light on the front (white) and rear (red) of their bike.

FIRE SAFETY



- Take sensible safety measures around your home to avoid fire hazards.
- Install at least one smoke alarm on each floor and test it weekly.
- Never drink and smoke – it's too easy to doze off and let your cigarette fall onto a flammable surface.
- Design a fire evacuation drill for your home and practice it e.g. plan escape routes from each room; close all doors behind you as you leave; warn your neighbours about the danger as you exit; if your clothes catch fire, stop – drop – roll; get outside quickly; agree a place to meet others; avoid using a lift; phone the fire brigade; do not re-enter the premises.

AT WORK



- Stick rigidly to workplace health and safety guidance – it’s there to keep you safe, not to make things inconvenient for you!
- Make sure that you have / wear the right protective gear – especially if you work in a hazardous environment.
- Don’t take risks when working on ladders or scaffolding or, indeed, at any height.
- Inspect all of your tools and equipment before using them.
- Be aware of potential hazards (spills on the floor, obstructions on pathways, dangerous chemicals, blocked emergency exits, frayed electrical cables etc.) and, if you spot one, remove it or report it immediately.
- Use machinery and power tools within the manufacturer’s guidelines.
- Watch your back when lifting objects – it’s not just the weight that can be a problem, but also how awkward the package is to grasp and the way that you try to lift it.
- Never turn up for work while under the influence of drink or drugs, or drive when you’re too tired / over the legal driving hours limit.
- Report any defects in equipment immediately – if in doubt, shout it out!
- Ensure that safety guards on machinery and electrical cut-off switches are always in place.
- Keep pesticides and chemicals in a locked store.
- If it’s a two-man job, then get some help. Don’t go it alone.

Find out more

Farm Safety

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/4133b-farm-safety>

Health and Safety Authority [RoI]

<https://www.hsa.ie>

Health and Safety Executive [NI]

<https://www.hse.gov.uk>

Minor Injury Units

<https://www2.hse.ie/services/injury-units> [RoI]

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/minor-injuries-units> [NI]

Out of Hours GP Service

<https://www2.hse.ie/services/find-a-gp-out-of-hours> [RoI]

<https://gpoutofhours.hscni.net> [NI]

Urgent and Emergency Care Services

<https://www2.hse.ie/services/emergency-departments> [RoI]

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/emergency-healthcare> [NI]

QUIZ ANSWERS

- 1. False:** The smells produced from your gut in the form of wind are totally dependent on what you eat and the reaction of foods in your gut.
- 2. False:** Pain is actually the brain's way of telling your body to halt its activity and correct what's causing the pain - not to keep going.
- 3. Do you want to talk about it? I'm here when you're ready:** Often when a person is feeling low or down they need assistance to make sense of their situation and, if required, to help them to access support. Thus, while it can seem awkward or intrusive to ask someone how they are feeling, sometimes it is exactly what they need. You don't have to be an expert counsellor to offer this listening ear.
- 4. Analysis of tobacco smoke shows that there are over 4,000 chemicals in tobacco smoke [Surgeon General 2004, CDC 2007].**
- 5. 6 Minutes:** Alcohol goes to your head in just six minutes, scientists from Heidelberg University Hospital in Germany have revealed. They set out to test the well-known saying that 'just one drink can quickly go to your head'. Only six minutes after consuming an amount of alcohol (equivalent to three glasses of beer or two glasses of wine), changes had already taken place in brain cells.
- 6. Women:** The average man's heart beats at around 70 beats per minute, while the average woman's heart beats at 78.
- 7. False:** Urologists at St. Mary's Hospital in London seem to have finally cracked this one. They found no statistically significant correlation between shoe size, height and (mildly) stretched penile length. It comes down to a combination of genetics and environmental factors - mostly in the womb before birth.
- 8. False:** Only a few cancers are inherited (2-3 in every 100 are linked to an inherited genetic component), while approximately 40% can actually be prevented by adopting a healthy lifestyle.
- 9. 70%:** So, giving your time might also help you to get a job - as well as having fun, gaining a sense of satisfaction, achieving something, increasing your confidence, learning a new skill, feeling useful and making some friends!
- 10. True:** This startling figure must be one of the biggest calls to action for men.

TEN TOP TIPS FOR MEN'S HEALTH ...

TIP 01 *EAT FIVE TO SEVEN PORTIONS OF FRUIT AND VEGETABLES A DAY, AND TRY NEW VARIETIES TO ENSURE ADEQUATE NUTRIENT INTAKES.*

TIP 02 *AIM FOR AT LEAST 30 MINUTES OF MODERATE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ON AT LEAST FIVE DAYS A WEEK (OR 150 MINUTES PER WEEK).*

TIP 03 *DISCUSS ANY PROBLEMS THAT YOU HAVE - AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE - WITH SOMEONE THAT YOU TRUST.*

TIP 04 *START THE JOURNEY TOWARDS QUITTING SMOKING TODAY - VISIT [HTTPS://WWW.QUIT.IE](https://www.quit.ie) OR [HTTPS://WWW.STOPSMOKINGNI.INFO](https://www.stopsmokingni.info)*

TIP 05 *WITH ALCOHOL, LESS IS ALWAYS MORE.*

TIP 06 *MAKE SURE THAT YOU HAVE REGULAR CHECK-UPS FOR CHOLESTEROL AND BLOOD PRESSURE - ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU GET OLDER AND/OR IF THERE IS ANY FAMILY HISTORY OF HEART DISEASE.*

TIP 07 *NO 'IFS' OR 'BUTS' - JUST PRACTISE SAFER SEX.*

TIP 08 *KNOW WHAT IS NORMAL FOR YOUR BODY - AS THIS WILL HELP YOU TO IDENTIFY SYMPTOMS THAT NEED TO BE CHECKED OUT BY A DOCTOR.*

TIP 09 *GET OUT THERE AND START TO RE-BUILD YOUR RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS. IF THESE ARE ALREADY IN PLACE, CONTINUE TO NURTURE THEM.*

TIP 10 *BE AN ACTION MAN - HAVING A KNOWLEDGE OF FIRST AID CAN SAVE A LIFE.*



MISSION: IS POSSIBLE



#MensHealthWeek



