

Men's Health Week 2017



The Toolbox for Action



MEN'S HEALTH WEEK

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Men's Health Week 2017

Why do we need to focus upon men's health issues and needs?

Males constitute almost 50% of the population on the island of Ireland and, therefore, deserve to have a gender lens focused upon their specific health needs. Research shows that these men experience a disproportionate burden of ill-health and die too young ...

- Local men die, on average, four and a half years younger than women do.
- Males have higher death rates than women for all of the leading causes of death.
- Poor lifestyles are responsible for a high proportion of chronic diseases.
- Late presentation to health services leads to a large number of problems becoming untreatable ...



Indeed, while many of these conditions are preventable, their prevalence amongst men may, in fact, rise in the future. However, this is not a lost cause. Much can be / is being done to improve this situation.

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When is Men's Health Week (MHW)?

Men's Health Week (MHW) always begins on the Monday before Father's Day and ends on Father's Day itself. This year, it will run from Monday 12th until Sunday 18th June 2017.

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Where is MHW celebrated?

MHW is celebrated in most European countries, as well as in the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and a number of other places worldwide.

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What are the aims of MHW?

Internationally, the core 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.

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Is there a specific theme this year?

Each year, individual countries focus upon a specific theme. The theme for 2017 on the island of Ireland is: *'It's all about HIM'* i.e. men's health needs deserve our undivided attention!

This is different to the theme in England and Wales - which focuses upon belly fat in men.

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Why choose the theme 'It's all about HIM' for 2017?

Not too long ago, we were unaware of the full extent of men's poor health status and the specific health issues that they face. However, this is no longer the case. In recent years, a broad range of research has highlighted the health challenges which face men in Ireland and further afield. For example ...

- Men's Health in Ireland (www.mhfi.org/fullreport.pdf)
- Getting Inside Men's Health (www.mhfi.org/gettinginsidemenshealth.pdf)
- Men's Health in Northern Ireland: Tackling the Root Causes of Men's [ill] Health (www.mhfi.org/manmattersbriefing1.pdf)
- A Report on the all-Ireland Young Men and Suicide Project (www.mhfi.org/ymspfullreport.pdf)
- Facing the Challenge - The Impact of Recession and Unemployment on Men's Health in Ireland (www.mhfi.org/IPHreport2011.pdf)
- A Report on the Excess Burden of Cancer among Men in the Republic of Ireland (www.mhfi.org/ICSreport2013.pdf)
- The State of Men's Health in Europe (www.mhfi.org/menshealtheurope.pdf) ...

Although the health of men in Ireland is poor, it can be improved in many significant ways. Work has already taken place to support the health needs of men and boys: Ireland was the first country in the world to have a National Men's Health Policy which was succeeded by a dedicated Healthy Ireland Men (HI-M) Action Plan; the 'Engage' men's health training programme has influenced how services and structures support males; new innovative and pioneering initiatives have been developed which provide models for improving men's health ... Much has been achieved, but there is still room for more.

But men's health is not just an issue for individual men. While it is crucial for men to take responsibility for looking after themselves, their health can often be determined by other factors outside of their personal control. There is also a need for policy-makers, service providers, and society as a whole to recognise the role that they need to play, and to do something practical about it. This will require focusing our attention upon the 'HIMs' all around us.

The starting point for this year's conversation about improving the health of males is to answer the question: '*How are you doing?*'... If the answer is '*not very well*', then it might be time to think about doing something that will make a positive difference to the health of the men and boys that you have contact with and influence over. MHW 2017 offers a launch pad to do this.

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What were the themes for MHW in previous years?

Previous MHWs in Ireland have focused upon ...

- 2005 - Obesity
- 2006 - Mental Wellbeing
- 2007 - Long-Term Conditions
- 2008 - Health in the Workplace
- 2009 - Access to Services
- 2010 - Physical Activity
- 2011 - Supporting Men and Boys during Challenging Times
- 2012 - What's Your First Instinct ... Fight? Flight? Find Out?
- 2013 - Action Men - Turning Words into Actions
- 2014 - Challenges and Choices: What's Your Aim?
- 2015 - Creating Culture Change
- 2016 - Men United for Health and Wellbeing: Are We Winning?



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Who is the target audience?

The purpose of MHW is to draw attention to the health and wellbeing issues affecting men and boys, and to encourage / promote personal, structural and systemic change where possible. This, therefore, implies that any messages and engagement needs to target:

- Males themselves
- Policy / decision-makers
- Service providers
- Public awareness and preconceptions

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Who can be involved in this week?

MHW gives everyone (health professionals, service providers, youth groups, sporting bodies, community organisations, employers, Churches, policy makers, family workers, pharmacists, the media, parents, individuals ...) an opportunity to encourage men and boys to take better care of their health and to seek help or treatment at an early stage.

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How can my organisation get involved?

Absolutely everyone can do something to support and celebrate MHW 2017. The focus for this year (i.e. *'It's all about HIM'*) lends itself to a wide range of ways to mark this occasion.

However, anything which promotes and celebrates the week, and encourages men and boys to lead healthier lifestyles, to be more aware of preventable health problems, and to seek early detection and treatment for health difficulties is very welcome.

A range of practical ideas for how you or your organisation can be involved in MHW 2017 can be found online at: www.mhfi.org/mhw2017celebrateit.pdf These suggestions range from the simple and free, to large-scale and expensive!

You could also consider helping to distribute the new, free, 32 page 'Challenges and Choices' Man Manual (see www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2017.html for details).

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Are there any ways that I can promote the week?

There is a common logo / image pack which can be used by everyone who wishes to raise awareness of MHW. There is also a MHW 2017 poster and postcard. These are important promotional tools - as one of the key aims is to let as many people as possible know about the week. These are available, free, to anyone who wishes to use them. See www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-image-pack.html for more details.

Promotion of MHW could take the form of:

- Putting a [Men's Health Week poster](#) (or two or three) up in your workplace / meeting space / community centre / local shop / waiting room / Men's Shed / home ... and/or sending the MHW postcards to people you know.
- Promoting the week on your website - using a copy of the [Men's Health Week logo](#) and/or other MHW images.

- Linking to the Men's Health Forum in Ireland's web page devoted to Men's Health Week 2017 (www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2017.html) from your own website, Facebook page or other social networking site.
- Sending an email to everyone in your contacts list to tell them about Men's Health Week, and asking them to forward the message to all their contacts. Why not also insert the MHW logo into your outgoing emails for the months of May and June?
- Becoming a fan of the Men's Health Week in Ireland's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/MensHealthWeek) and sending this link to all your online friends.
- Including information on Men's Health Week in your mailouts / newsletters.
- Telling others about what is happening in your area during Men's Health Week by posting details on the MHFI website. Use the form at: www.mhfi.org/mhw/promote-an-event.html
- Making the Men's Health Week logo your computer desktop 'wallpaper' during May and June.
- Reminding your colleagues to follow all the latest news on Twitter (www.twitter.com/MensHealthIRL). Also Tweeting about the week yourself, and including #MHW2017 in your message.
- Encouraging the men you know to get involved in some of the activities taking place around the country during Men's Health Week 2017 ...

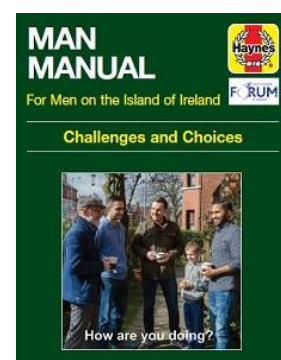
Doing one or more of these simple (and free) things would contribute hugely to MHW 2017!

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What is the 'Challenges and Choices' Man Manual?

Research clearly shows that there are many challenges to be faced when seeking to improve men's health. However, it also highlights that men's health can be improved in many significant ways - if the right choices are made. Men, themselves, have a key role to play in this process.

One of the most successful and sought after elements of Men's Health Week 2016 was the 'Challenges and Choices' Man Manual which was distributed free-of-charge to males throughout the whole island of Ireland. Almost all of the 47,000 hard copies of this booklet were given out within a few weeks of their release.



The 'Challenges and Choices' booklet is a male-friendly, 32 page publication, which highlights ten key men's health issues i.e. alcohol, food, physical activity, smoking, stress, blood pressure, sexually transmitted diseases, skin cancers, back care and help-seeking behaviour. It was written by leading men's health expert Dr Ian Banks (internationally acclaimed men's health author, President of the European Men's Health Forum, the British Medical Association's Spokesperson on Men's Health, and a resident of Northern Ireland).

This Manual: issues a realistic and practical challenge to improve the reader's health in each area of concern; provides a reason for why it is important to consider taking action in relation to each issue; offers three possible choices for what actions can be taken to combat each condition; signposts the reader to local sources of help and support.

During MHW 2017, 12,200 updated copies of this [publication](#) will be made available to men throughout the island of Ireland. These have been funded by the Health Service Executive in the Republic of Ireland and the Public Health Agency in Northern Ireland.

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Who are the Men's Health Week 'Poster Boys' for 2017?

Every year, local men are featured on the posters and publicity materials to publicise Men's Health Week (MHW). Sometimes it is famous local men (e.g. last year, Michael O'Neill [Northern Ireland Team Manager] and Martin O'Neill [Republic of Ireland Team Manager] agreed to be the 'poster boys' for MHW during the 'Euro 2016' championship) and sometimes it is just ordinary guys.

During MHW 2017, we are pleased to welcome men and boys of all ages and backgrounds to our poster. The line-up this year is comprised of ...



Back Row:

Paul O'Kane, Joe McCusker, Jonny Ashe and Jonathan Boyd

Front Row:

Jonathan and Cleo Wallace, David McLearnon, Mehedi Hasan, Jamie Ashe, Cailan and Acheron Thompson

The all-island Planning Group is also very grateful to ..

- [Common Grounds Fairtrade Café](#) in University Avenue, Belfast, for allowing us to take photographs in their premises.
- [East Belfast Sure Start](#), [North Belfast Men's Shed](#), [Belfast Health and Social Care Trust](#), [Focus: The Identity Trust](#) and the [Working with Young Men Team in YouthAction NI](#) for recruiting people for the photographs.

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Who has planned Men's Health Week 2017 in Ireland?

MHW in Ireland has been planned by a broad range of partners who contributed to an inter-agency Planning Group (see www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2017.html for a list of members). This body began meeting in January 2017, and has had ongoing communication ever since.

The planning process drew upon the insight, expertise, support and contacts of diverse organisations (voluntary, community, statutory and academic sectors as well as men's groups) from across the whole of Ireland. The group was convened and coordinated by the [Men's Health Forum in Ireland](#) (MHFI). MHFI works alongside other Men's Health Fora worldwide to focus attention upon male health issues.

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What is the Men's Health Forum in Ireland?

The Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) is a diverse network of individuals and organisations, men and women, from both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The Forum was established in 1999, and operates on an all-island basis. At present, it has one worker, but is, primarily, structured, organised and run using the expertise, resources and enthusiasm of volunteers.

MHFI is a charitable organisation which is registered as a Company Limited by Guarantee. The Forum seeks to promote all aspects of the health and wellbeing of men and boys on the island of Ireland through research, training, networking, health initiatives and advocacy.

One of MHFI's core areas of work is the coordination of Men's Health Week (MHW) activity on the island of Ireland each year. More details can be found at: www.mhfi.org

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How can I find out more about MHW?

To find out more about Men's Health Week 2017, contact ...

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or visit ...

Website: www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2017.html
Facebook: www.facebook.com/MensHealthWeek
Twitter: www.twitter.com/MensHealthIRL
YouTube: www.youtube.com/channel/UCukqjWhGpp1SlnJklo-0VvA

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Text side of MHW 2017 Postcard