

Men's Health Week 2020



The Toolbox for Action



MEN'S HEALTH WEEK

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Men's Health Week (MHW) 2020

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 almost four years younger than women do.
- Males have higher death rates than females for almost all of the leading causes of death and at all ages.
- Poor lifestyles are responsible for a high proportion of chronic diseases.
- Late presentation to health services can lead 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 15th until Sunday 21st June 2020.

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Where is MHW celebrated?

MHW is celebrated in many 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 2020 on the island of Ireland is: *'Restoring the Balance'*. In the wake of (what might be) the first wave of COVID-19, everyone is being asked to *'be part of the solution'* and to do something practical and realistic that will have a positive impact.

This is similar to the theme in England, Scotland and Wales which is *'Take Action on Covid19'*.

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Why choose the theme 'Restoring the Balance' for 2020?

Not too long ago, we were unaware of the full extent of men's poor health status and the specific health issues that they are contending with. 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)
- Middle-Aged Men and Suicide in Ireland (www.mhfi.org/MAMRMreport.pdf) ...

Yet, although the health of men in Ireland is poor, it is not a 'lost cause' - and it can be improved in many significant ways. A wide range of innovative and positive 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; pioneering approaches have been developed and tested which provide models for improving men's health; new men's health and support groups are evolving across the island of Ireland ... Much has been achieved, but there is still room for improvement.

Of course, men, themselves, need to play a central role in taking control of their health and wellbeing. 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. Thus, 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.



2020 has been an exceptional year in many ways. All aspects of life on the island of Ireland continue to be shaped by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic - which, it appears, is having a [disproportionate impact upon men](#). Indeed, while there is a broadly similar incidence and prevalence to women, men: are faster at developing serious illness; recover slower from the virus; and have a higher death rate.

Individuals across the island are trying to re-build their lives, relationships, jobs, finances, physical health, emotional resilience, connections, routines etc. Some people are still living with trauma and bereavement. Others are having to re-focus their priorities and find new ways of living. Everyone's mental health has been impacted to some degree, and there is a need to find some new form of stable, realistic and relevant equilibrium - at least in the short-term.

This is why the theme chosen for Men's Health Week 2020 is '**Restoring the Balance**'. However, to make this happen, everyone needs to '**Be Part of the Solution**'.

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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?
- 2017 - It's all about HI-M: How are you doing?
- 2018 - One Small Step for Man
- 2019 - Men's Health Matters: Make the Time. Take the Time.



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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 2020. The theme this year (i.e. *'Restoring the Balance'*) lends itself to a wide range of ways to *'be part of the solution'*. 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.

Social distancing rules mean that traditional face-to-face events cannot take place this year. However, for simple and practical ideas on how you or your organisation can support the week, see the next page. Most of the suggestions are easy and free!

You could also consider helping to distribute the new, free, 32 page 'Challenges and Choices' Man Manual (see <https://www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2020.html#Challenges> 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 2020 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, and 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:

- a) Putting a Men's Health Week [poster](#) (or two or three) up in your workplace / local shop / waiting room / home ... and/or printing-off and sending the MHW [postcard](#) to people you know.
- b) Promoting the week on your website - using a copy of the Men's Health Week [logo](#) or [badge](#) or [banner](#).
- c) Linking to the Men's Health Forum in Ireland's web page devoted to Men's Health Week 2020 (www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2020.html) from your own website, Facebook page or other social networking site.
- d) Sending an email to everyone on your mailing 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?
- e) 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.
- f) Including information on [Men's Health Week 2020](#) in your mailouts / newsletters.
- g) 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
- h) Making one of the Men's Health Week 2020 [graphics](#) your computer desktop 'wallpaper' during May and June.
- i) Reminding your colleagues to follow all the latest news on Twitter (www.twitter.com/MensHealthIRL).
- j) Posting / Tweeting about the week using the [pool of ready-made resources](#) and including **#MensHealthWeek** and **#RestoringTheBalance** in your message.
- k) Using the MHW [Facebook Cover Photo](#) or [Twitter Header Image](#) on your social media pages and feeds ...

Doing one or more of these simple (and free) things would contribute hugely to MHW 2020!

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MEN'S HEALTH WEEK 2020
Find out more at www.mhfi.org **#MensHealthWeek**

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 previous Men's Health Weeks has been the ['Challenges and Choices' Man Manual](#) which is distributed free-of-charge to males throughout the whole island of Ireland. Almost all of the hard copies of this booklet are 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 2020 15,000 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 has planned Men's Health Week 2020 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-2020.html for a list of members). This body began meeting in November 2019, 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 2020, contact ...

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or visit ...

Website: www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2020.html
Facebook: www.facebook.com/MensHealthWeek
Twitter: www.twitter.com/MensHealthIRL
YouTube: www.youtube.com/c/MensHealthForumInIreland

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MEN'S HEALTH WEEK 2020

RESTORING THE BALANCE
BE PART OF THE SOLUTION

Visit www.mhfi.org to find out more

#MensHealthWeek #MHW2020