MEN'S HEALTH FACTSHEET

Understanding Men's Health

A practical guide to prevention, routine checks and changes that deserve attention

The short version

Men's health is not only about prostate or sexual health. It includes heart and metabolic health, cancer prevention, mental wellbeing, sleep, musculoskeletal health and the circumstances that affect daily life. Many conditions are easier to manage when identified early. Knowing what is normal for you, attending appropriate checks and asking for help when something changes are valuable parts of looking after your health.

Health is more than willpower

Health is shaped by biology, age and family history, but also by work, income, housing, relationships, caring responsibilities, culture, access to services and previous experiences of healthcare. The Men's Health Strategy for England recognises that men can face practical and social barriers to seeking help. Good support starts by understanding the person and his circumstances, not by blaming him for being unwell.

Five foundations to review

Heart and metabolic health	Blood pressure, cholesterol, blood glucose, weight distribution, smoking and family history can influence the risk of heart disease, stroke, kidney disease and type 2 diabetes. High blood pressure and raised cholesterol often cause no symptoms.
Mental wellbeing	Stress, anxiety, depression, loneliness, trauma and harmful gambling or substance use can affect health, work and relationships. Changes may appear as irritability, withdrawal, poor sleep, risk-taking or loss of interest as well as sadness.
Sleep and recovery	Persistent insomnia, loud snoring, witnessed pauses in breathing, gasping, marked daytime sleepiness or unusual behaviours during sleep deserve attention. Poor sleep can affect mood, concentration, safety and physical health.
Sexual and urinary health	Changes in erections, sexual desire, ejaculation, fertility or urination can have several possible causes. They may sometimes provide useful clues about wider physical or emotional health and can be discussed confidentially with a healthcare professional.
Movement, strength and pain	Regular movement, strength, balance and mobility support long-term health. Activity should be adapted to ability, disability, pain, medical conditions and personal circumstances rather than treated as one-size-fits-all.

Routine checks and screening

Eligibility can depend on age, sex assigned at birth, medical history and where you live. Invitations and programmes can change, so check current NHS information or ask your GP practice.

NHS Health Check	In England, eligible adults aged 40 to 74 without certain pre-existing conditions should generally be offered an NHS Health Check every 5 years. It assesses factors including blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes risk, smoking, alcohol use and physical activity.
Blood pressure	Blood pressure can be checked through a GP practice and many community pharmacies. People aged 40 or over in England who meet the NHS criteria may be eligible for a free pharmacy check.
Bowel screening	In England, everyone aged 50 to 74 is offered a bowel cancer screening home test every 2 years. People aged 75 or over can request a kit. Complete the kit even if you feel well.
AAA screening	Men in England are invited for a one-off abdominal aortic aneurysm ultrasound in the year they turn 65. Men over 65 who were not screened can contact the local screening service. Eligibility for trans and non-binary people depends partly on sex assigned at birth and GP registration.
Lung screening	NHS lung cancer screening is available in parts of England. People aged 55 to 74 who have ever smoked may be contacted by their GP or a local NHS service.
Prostate and PSA	There is no routine national PSA screening programme. Men and anyone with a prostate can ask a GP about PSA testing. The potential benefits, limitations and individual risk factors should be discussed before deciding.

Know what is normal for you

Arrange medical advice for a new, persistent, worsening or unexplained change, including:

- a new lump, swelling or change in a testicle
- blood in urine, semen or stool
- persistent urinary changes or pelvic pain
- unexplained weight loss, fatigue or night sweats
- a persistent cough, breathlessness or change in a mole
- ongoing erectile difficulties or loss of sexual desire
- low mood, anxiety, withdrawal or difficulty coping
- loud snoring, breathing pauses or severe daytime sleepiness

These changes often have causes other than cancer or serious illness, but they should not be ignored or self-diagnosed.

When help is urgent

Call 999 in an emergency

Seek emergency help for possible heart attack symptoms; signs of stroke; severe difficulty breathing; sudden collapse; a severe allergic reaction; or an immediate risk of serious harm. Sudden, severe testicular pain requires immediate assessment at A&E.; If you are unsure whether a medical problem is urgent, use NHS 111. If you cannot keep yourself or someone else safe, call 999 or go to A&E.;

Small, realistic actions

- Register with a GP and make sure the practice has your current contact details.
- Accept screening invitations and ask about checks for which you may be eligible.
- Know important family history, particularly early heart disease, diabetes and relevant cancers.
- Choose movement, food, sleep and alcohol goals that are realistic for your health, resources and responsibilities.
- If you smoke, ask about evidence-based stop-smoking support; needing support is not a failure.
- Talk early when stress, low mood, pain, sleep or substance use begins to affect everyday life.

Preparing for an appointment

Before	Write down the change, when it began, what makes it better or worse, and how it affects daily life. List medicines, supplements, allergies and relevant family history.
During	Explain your main concern first. Ask what the possible causes are, whether tests are needed, what you should do next and what warning signs require earlier help.
After	Check that you understand the plan, how results will be communicated and when follow-up is due. Contact the service again if symptoms worsen or you do not receive an expected result.

How Health Matters UK can support you

Health Matters UK provides health education and personalised wellbeing support. We can help you organise concerns, identify realistic wellbeing priorities, prepare questions for a healthcare appointment and locate trusted services. We do not diagnose illness, interpret diagnostic tests, prescribe treatment or replace regulated healthcare professionals.

A useful next step

Choose one action: book an overdue check, complete a screening kit, write down a change you have been ignoring, or speak honestly to someone you trust about how you are feeling. Progress can begin with one manageable conversation.

Men's health matters to us

Every man deserves clear, respectful and evidence-informed information that recognises his individual health, experiences and circumstances. Our aim is to make it easier to ask questions, understand choices and take realistic next steps without judgement.

Important information

This factsheet is for general education and does not replace personalised medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Do not start, stop or change prescribed medication without speaking to an appropriately qualified healthcare professional. For urgent medical help, use NHS 111; call 999 in an emergency.

Evidence and review

Prepared in line with Health Matters UK's Evidence & Editorial Standards. The principal sources were current NHS information, NICE guidance and the Men's Health Strategy for England. Specialist factsheets in this series provide more detailed references for individual conditions. External guidance remains the responsibility of the issuing organisation.

• Department of Health and Social Care. Men's health: a strategic vision for England, updated December 2025. gov.uk/government/publications/mens-health-strategy-for-england

• NHS. NHS Health Check. nhs.uk/tests-and-treatments/nhs-health-check/

• NHS. NHS screening, including bowel, lung and AAA screening. nhs.uk/tests-and-treatments/nhs-screening/

• NHS. How to check your testicles, reviewed August 2024. nhs.uk/tests-and-treatments/how-to-check-your-testicles/

• NHS. PSA test, reviewed September 2024. nhs.uk/tests-and-treatments/psa-test/

• NICE. Cardiovascular disease: risk assessment and reduction, including lipid modification (NG238). nice.org.uk/guidance/ng238

• NHS. Help for mental health problems. nhs.uk/mental-health/

Published: November 2026 Version: 1.0 Review due: November 2027, or sooner if guidance changes

© 2026 Health Matters UK. This original factsheet may be downloaded for personal use. Please do not alter or reproduce it commercially without permission.