

Men's Health Week

The Health Column

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This year, the theme of Men's Health Week is 'Healthy Body – Healthy Mind: Keeping the Balance'. This theme explores the different ways men and boys are managing to keep healthy – physically and emotionally – in a busy and sometimes challenging world. From 12–18 June 2017, communities around the country will come together to create events, promotions and activities tailored to the needs of men and boys.

Men and boys face different health and wellbeing concerns than women and girls, and Men's Health Week is an opportunity to both acknowledge their differences and look for ways to improve the health and wellbeing of men and boys throughout Australia.

There is an ongoing, increasing and mostly silent crisis in the health and wellbeing of men and boys. Due to a lack of awareness, poor health education, and culturally conditioned behaviour patterns in their work and personal lives, the health and wellbeing of men and boys is an area of concern. In Australia and in several other countries, men and boys experience significantly higher rates of addiction, violence, crime, accident and premature death in comparison to their female counterparts. Life expectancy for men is around four years less than that of women (80.1 years compared to 84.3 years).

Men also show significantly higher rates of death from cancer, heart disease, homicide and suicide. Australia has taken a leading role in establishing Men's Health Week as a well-known and clearly-defined event that focuses attention on men's health and wellbeing issues and stimulates health promoting activities at all levels.

The National Male Health Policy (released in May 2010) provides a framework for improving male health across Australia – with a focus on taking action on multiple fronts. It identifies six priority areas for action. These are to promote:

- **Priority 1:** Optimal health outcomes for males.
- **Priority 2:** Health equity between population groups of males.
- **Priority 3:** Improved health for males at different life stages.
- **Priority 4:** A focus on preventive health for males.



- **Priority 5:** Building a strong evidence base on male health.
- **Priority 6:** Improved access to health care for males.

A clear opportunity exists for health and other organisations – public, voluntary and private, national and local – to work together to focus attention on key men’s health issues and to develop practical initiatives that can make a difference to the health of Australian men.

During Men’s Health Week let’s reach out to Aussie men and boys and create events that respond to the issues impacting on the health of men, boys and their families in your local area—useful men’s health information, event ideas and contacts, as well as other resources, are available from www.menshealthweek.org.au

Most men’s health problems are preventable. What is required is a new approach to health interventions and health promotion which delivers messages to men that their health and wellbeing is important and encourages men to access health services more regularly to set up a health maintenance plan with their doctor. Many men typically do not access medical, allied health or welfare services in a timely way when their health and wellbeing is at risk. Accordingly health services need to review their way of operating and be mindful of making their services more men friendly.

Your local pharmacy is your health destination. Pharmacists and pharmacy staff can advise on men’s health and provide services that men can benefit from. Services available may include blood pressure checks, weight management, and cholesterol checks, as well as others. Ask your pharmacist about the services they offer. Pharmacists can also provide information and advice on the medicines you take.

You can get more detailed information on men’s health from the Self Care Fact Cards such as *Men’s health*, *Erectile dysfunction* and *Prostate problems* available from pharmacies providing the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia’s Self Care health information.

For the nearest Self Care pharmacy location phone the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia on 1300 369 772, or go to www.psa.org.au/selfcare, then click ‘Find a *Self Care pharmacy* near you’.