

National Men's Health Week is approaching! This year it happens on June 10-16 leading up to Father's day. Alarming statistics show that men's health is at great risk. On average, men die 6 years younger than women and suffer higher mortality rates for the top 10 causes of death.

<http://www.menshealthnetwork.org/library/silenthealthcrisis.pdf>

What can you do if you are male or how can you assist your male loved ones (husbands, fathers, brothers, sons) in improving their health? A great resource is the Men's Health Network <http://menshealthnetwork.org/> You may also download this guide to a healthy lifestyle for men <http://www.blueprintformenshealth.com/>



According to research from Ohio State University Medical Center, men are two to three times more likely than women to get skin cancer. This may be due to a lower level of cancer-fighting antioxidants in their skin. Encourage the use of a waterproof sunscreen of at least SPF 15 that covers for both UVA and UVB rays and **reapply generously every hour**. Men are also less likely to hydrate properly so when they are outdoors being active or exercising remind them to consume 8 ounces of fluid every 15 minutes (that's 32 ounces or 4 cups each hour!)



Stress is something we all deal with at times and it can take a toll on our bodies and our health. Common causes of stress are long workdays, too little sleep and information overload. Stress may be a factor in a variety of health concerns from headaches to heart disease. Stress may aggravate an existing health problem or it may trigger a health problem for which you are already at risk. The hormone cortisol produced during the stress response can suppress your immune system and increase your susceptibility to infections (including viral infections such as a cold or the flu). Stress can also increase your risk of cardiovascular disease and aggravate other conditions such as asthma, GI problems, skin disorders, chronic pain and mental health concerns. (But not all stress is bad! Positive stress—such as from a new baby or new job—can help challenge and motivate us. Also, short-lived or acute stress may actually boost your immune system and can be mentally stimulating and increase productivity. This “good” stress can benefit your health and help to prevent disease and promote longevity). Learning to manage chronic and harmful stress is important to our physical and emotional well being and should be an active and ongoing process.

## Mayo Clinic 10 Ways to Stress Less: (important for both men and women!)

1. Identify your stressors-External sources might be work, family, environment, or internal such as unrealistic expectations, perfectionism, worry, negative attitudes, poor health and eating habits
2. Develop an action plan-Concentrate on things you can change! Simplify your life—pace yourself and don't try to do too much! Plan your day so you feel more in control of your life. Organize your home and work space. **Exercise is one of the BEST tools for managing stress**—it's mentally relaxing and soothing.
3. Practice Tolerance-Try to become more tolerant of yourself and situations you can't control. Accept that a certain degree of stress is normal for everyone.
4. Learn to manage anger-This is an important technique for reducing stress! Identify your anger triggers and the symptoms which can act as a caution light for you. When you see anger coming, take a short timeout-count to 10 and take a few deep breaths—let your brain catch up with your emotions and try to think before you act! Release some emotional energy through a walk, listening to music, writing in a journal or another distraction. Don't bottle up your anger-diffuse it! Seek advice if you continue to struggle with anger management.
5. Practice positive thinking-Use positive self-talk to weed out misconceptions and challenge with rational and positive thoughts. A positive, hopeful attitude helps manage stress while a negative one aggravates it.
6. **Take care of yourself**-Get adequate sleep, keep physically active (helps to burn off stress and tension) and eat a healthy and balanced diet.
7. **Enjoy a good laugh**-Laughter helps reduce or relieve tension and helps you cope. It may boost the release of brain chemicals that create feelings of well-being so laugh often!
8. **Learn to relax**-True relaxation is a feeling of peace of mind. Seek out activities that give you pleasure-art, music, hobbies every day! Practice relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, muscle relaxation, meditation, visualization, yoga or Tai chi.
9. Get professional help-Call on your doctor, a mental health professional, or clergy person. At ISU we have the Employee Assistance program (EAP) available to us for help <http://www.hrs.iastate.edu/eap/>
10. Give yourself time-It takes both practice and patience for stress management skills to become useful-keep working at it!

Take action now to lower health risk and to learn to manage your stress. If you need help with developing an exercise program, contact the ISU Exercise Clinic <http://www.hhp.hs.iastate.edu/exercise-clinic.php> . If you need help with improving your eating habits, contact the ISU Nutrition Clinic <http://www.fshn.hs.iastate.edu/nutritionclinic/> Small steps in a positive direction can reduce your stress and

For some tips lighter fare, check out these suggestions for healthy outdoor eating <http://allrecipes.com/HowTo/Healthy-Outdoor-Eating/Detail.aspx>

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