Focus on men's health

Many men focus on their jobs and families but don’t pay enough attention to staying healthy. In fact, a recent study showed that men are 24% less likely than women to have seen a doctor over the past year. This means that many men are not getting the preventative health care that can make a huge difference in the length and quality of their lives.

The top causes of death for men are heart disease, cancer (with prostate, lung and colorectal being the most common) and accidents. To some degree, all are favorably impacted by making good choices.

June is Men's Health Month, a time for celebrating men and encouraging them to lead healthy lives. Here are some things that men can do to protect their health:

✦ Reduce stress by developing a strong work-life balance and getting mental health support when needed.
✦ Make appointments with health care professionals and discuss concerns and lifestyle goals.
✦ Quit smoking, get enough sleep and moderate alcohol use.
✦ Develop a healthy eating and exercise plan.
✦ Stay up-to-date on vaccinations.
✦ Develop a relationship with a physician. Regular doctor’s visits allow both patient and doctor to monitor blood pressure, weight, blood sugar, mental health and other body systems. Having a consistent record of these numbers and concerns can help health professionals identify potential problems while they can be most effectively treated.

Men who haven’t seen a doctor in a while might think about booking an appointment in June. It’s a perfect time to get serious about health.

Dear God, I’m thankful for the men in my life. Care for them and guide them as they go through their days and give them the wisdom needed to care for themselves. Amen.

Resources: Advocatehealth.com • Men's Health Network: menshealthnetwork.org • Centers for Disease Control: cdc.gov/men • Men's Health Month: menshealthmonth.org

How faith communities can promote men's health

Many men are deeply involved with their faith communities. This means that congregations and individual members can do a lot to promote men’s health. If you are active in your faith community, here are some ideas for integrating men’s health awareness into the life of your congregation:

✦ Men's groups can invite healthcare professionals to address the group on common men’s health issues, including heart disease, mental health, accidents and fitness.
✦ June is Men’s Health Month. Place informational posters and literature around the house of worship. Men's groups can arrange field trips to health fairs that offer screenings for many men's health conditions.
✦ Make use of your community kitchen to offer healthy cooking demonstrations. Many men enjoy cooking but may not know how to prepare food in a way that is delicious and nutritionally balanced.
✦ Encourage men to get real about their mental health. Men sometimes feel embarrassed about reaching out for support. Learn about stress, depression, anxiety and other mental health issues and develop positive strategies for helping men get treatment.
✦ Offer to provide rides to doctor’s offices and hospitals.
✦ Talk to the women in your congregation about the importance of men’s health. Wives, mothers, daughters and friends can play an important role in encouraging men to get regular checkups and make healthy lifestyle changes.
✦ Encourage men to incorporate health concerns into their spiritual practices. Prayer, meditation and works of charity can reduce stress and improve life satisfaction.
✦ June is also a great month to celebrate the Wear Blue campaign. This program, sponsored by the Men’s Health Network, raises awareness of men's health by encouraging groups and communities to wear blue on a selected day. Choose a Wear Blue day and encourage your community to get together in support of men’s health.