



Well Being Fortnightly

Well Being Edition 5— 27th November 2020

Welcome and context

Welcome to our second special health related newsletter and in this issue we look at some of the implications around men's health. Did you know that globally, men die on average six years earlier than women, and for reasons that are largely preventable. Which means that it doesn't have to be that way: we can all take action to live healthier, happier and longer lives.

This edition we focus on Men's health month and a chance to look at some of the issues related to male health

Even if we are not male we still may have partners, husbands, brothers, uncles and grandads who may benefit from our newsletter this week.

Have a read as it could help to save someone's life.



Prostate Problems

1 in 8 men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer during their lives. Prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in men in the UK. Globally, more than 1.3 million men are diagnosed with prostate cancer each year. Across the country, there are more than 333,500 men living with and beyond the disease. Many are dealing with serious side effects from treatment.

What signs should I be looking out for?

- A need to urinate frequently, especially at night
- Difficulty starting urination or holding back urine
- Weak or interrupted flow of urine
- Painful or burning urination
- Difficulty in having an erection
- Painful ejaculation
- Blood in urine or semen
- Frequent pain or stiffness in the lower back, hips, or upper thighs

Who is at risk?

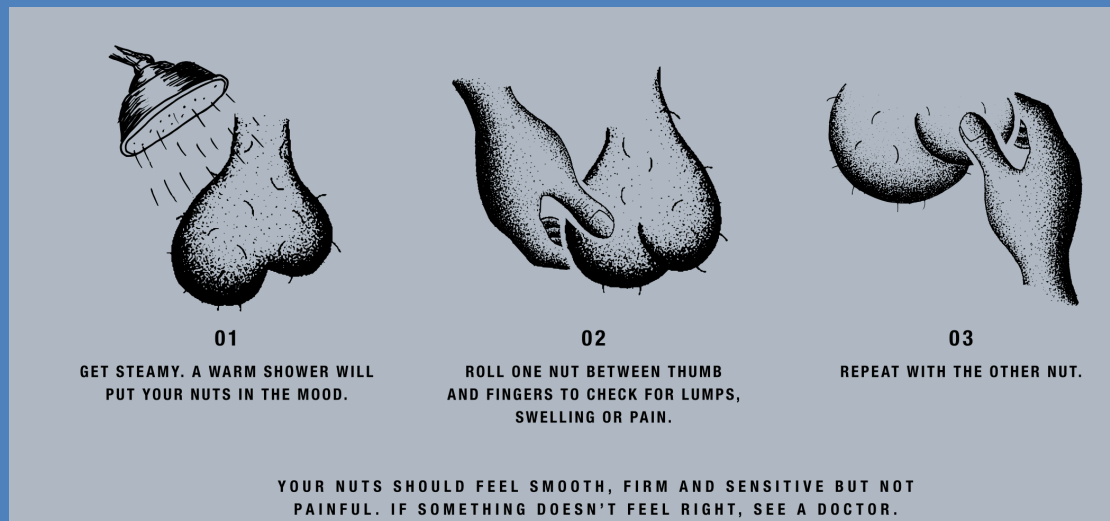
Your risk of developing prostate cancer increases with age, but that doesn't mean it's a disease that only affects old men. Prostate cancer is the second most common cancer in men worldwide. Men who are black, and men who have a family history (a brother or father with prostate cancer), are 2.5x more likely to get prostate cancer.

If you're **50**, you should be talking to your doctor about PSA testing. If you're black, you need to start that conversation at **45**. And if you have a brother or father with prostate cancer in their history, do it at **45**.

Troublesome Testicles

Testicular cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in young men in the UK.

Watch the following video which will help you to ensure that you are checking fully.



Testicular cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in young men in the UK.

Men with undescended testes at birth, or who have a family history, like a father or brother who has had testicular cancer, are at an increased risk. And if you've had testicular cancer before, there's also a heightened risk it could return.

Testicular cancer is a highly treatable cancer and can be effectively treated, and often cured, if diagnosed and treated early. Advanced testicular cancer can also be cured with treatment including:

- Orchiectomy (surgical removal of the affected testis), done under general anaesthetic
- Chemotherapy or radiotherapy, often prescribed after surgery to treat any remaining cancer cells that may have spread to other parts of the body, such as lymph nodes

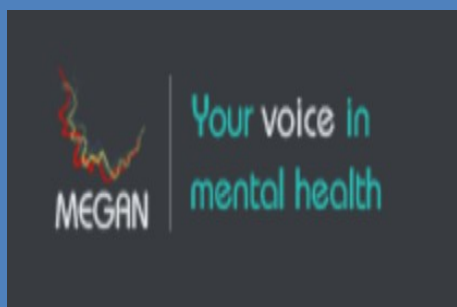
Testicular cancer and the removal of one testicle should not alter your ability to have sex or have children. The effect on fertility following removal of one of the testicles is minimal as a single testicle produces such large numbers of sperm. Men with testicular cancer should talk to their oncologist about sperm banking before commencing chemotherapy or radiation therapy.

Super Support

Medway have a range of support networks available locally should you require Mental Health Support. Here are a few of the key ones. Click on each logo for further information and support.



Medway Talking Therapies offer short term free counselling services for people over 18 suffering from mild to moderate depression, anxiety and other common causes of mental health issues. You can self-refer or be referred by a health professional by calling 0300 029 3000.



Group support for adults that have or have had mental health issues. Events are also held to allow Medway residents to express their views on the provision of mental health support in Medway

Phone: 01634 402 077

Email: enquiries@megancic.org.uk

Website: <http://megancic.org.uk/>



Men in Sheds in Gillingham and brings together men aged 25 and over who are out of work or retired to share their DIY skills and spend time together over a cup of tea.

Phone: 01634 338 600



Activity group with a wide range of opportunities to develop new skills, have fun, relax, and make new friends. Open Friday and Saturday evenings, and Sunday afternoon.

To find out more or book a registration appointment phone 01634 581511.

Scary Statistics

Why are suicides so high amongst men?

77% of suicides are by men. Are the myths around depression responsible for their deaths? Each year across the UK, approximately 6,000 people take their own lives. Around 90% of suicide victims suffer from a mental health condition and those at the highest risk include middle aged men living with depression. Some of these men might end up becoming dependent on alcohol, which possibly starts as a coping strategy but eventually ends up worsening their mood and leading to other problems affecting their health, employment and relationships. Despite the overall number of suicides falling in 2012, the total number for men increased. Figures from the Office for National Statistics show that highest number of suicides was recorded among men aged 40 to 44. For this age group, men were more than four times as likely as women to commit suicide. In total, men make up 77% of all suicides in the UK.

Call 0800 107 0160 to release the pressure if you're feeling stressed. You can also text "Kent" to 85258 for 24 hour mental health crisis support via text from trained volunteers.

Digestible Documents

This week we share an article around the importance of talking about our health.

As the incidence of testicular and prostate cancer continue to rise, a MORI opinion poll published today for the Institute of Cancer Research's (ICR) everyman campaign shows there is still a long way to go to educate men. Despite the fact that testicular cancer is the most common cancer to affect young men and that cases are doubling every 20 years, over two thirds (68 per cent) of those questioned aged between 15 and 34 knew little or nothing about it.

Prostate cancer kills 11,000 men in the UK each year and is predicted to overtake lung and breast to become the most common cancer in the UK, but only 26 per cent of men said they knew a great deal or a fair amount about the disease. A simple self-examination for testicular cancer is recommended by health professionals, but 49 per cent of men at risk (aged 15-34) had never checked their testicles for lumps or abnormalities. The statistic was even worse in the younger age bracket of 15-24 year olds, at 56 per cent.

Interestingly 38 per cent of young men said they knew how to check - so a significant number of them may not be acting on this knowledge.

When it comes to topics of conversation, only 8 per cent of 15-34 year olds name personal health issues as a frequent subject for discussion. Women are a much more popular topic for this age range - 59 per cent, compared to 22 per cent for older men. And even politics is more likely to be raised at 13 per cent. Young men are more likely to talk to their mothers than to any other relative or friend about their health - 48 per cent. (For 15-24 year olds the figure rises to 54 per cent.) They don't talk nearly so often to male relatives - 25 per cent of 15-34 year olds talk to their fathers and 9 per cent to their brothers. Just 28 per cent would talk to a close male friend. 67 per cent of men aged 35 or over would talk to their partners about their health.

Apart from women, popular topics of conversation overall were football (53 per cent), cars (44 per cent) and money (33 per cent). Men are more likely to discuss politics as they get older, though the average overall was 26 per cent. The MORI research also reveals the majority of men (67 per cent) think there is far too little or not enough information available to them on prostate and testicular cancer.

This finding is supported by misconceptions on the treatment and prognosis facing those with testicular cancer. 54 per cent cited infertility and 38 per cent impotence as possible side effects when in fact neither is a high risk. On average, those questioned thought 63 out of 100 diagnosed cases would be cured when in reality the figure is significantly more encouraging at around 96 out of 100. However, this is only if it is caught and treated early.

The research comes at the start of the second annual everyman male cancer awareness month. Professor Colin Cooper of the ICR said:

"This research reinforces the urgency for more widely available information, for an environment in which men feel more relaxed about personal health matters and in which they are encouraged to take prompt action when necessary." Questions about knowledge of these cancers were asked in a poll for the ICR in June 1998 and there is an improvement in awareness levels. The figure for those who said they knew a great deal or a fair amount about prostate cancer has risen from 19 per cent to 26 per cent, and for testicular cancer from 19 per cent to 28 per cent. Professor Cooper remarked: "These results are encouraging but there is still a long way to go. It is clear that the everyman campaign needs to build on its success so far and play an even more significant role in pioneering research developments and in offering informative and readily accessible information to all men."

Clare Moynihan, Medical Sociologist at the Institute of Cancer Research specialising in male cancers commented: "The MORI results are interesting in the light of my in-depth interviews with men who haven't got cancer. These interviews revealed that men indeed did not speak to each other about cancer and health in general - it was considered private. Whilst men did not know about cancer they were avid for elusive information. That is one of the many reasons why the everyman campaign is so important."

She added: "My research has also shown there is little communication between men in families which have a history of prostate or testicular cancer, and this is serious in the context of genetic disease where it is crucial for family members to talk. It also showed that women seem to be the gate-keepers of health information for men, just as the MORI research indicates. This suggests that we should also be pushing the message home about testicular and prostate cancer to women as well."

The ICR's everyman campaign was launched in September 1997 to increase awareness of prostate and testicular cancer and to raise £6 million towards the establishment of Britain's first dedicated male cancer research centre. £2.3 million has been raised in pledges and income so far and initial building work began on the centre at Sutton in Surrey last month.