

(Health and Wellness) Get your annual medical exam: Got symptoms? Visit the doctor

Written by Brandi Patterson-Phillips
Monday, 08 June 2009 15:53

Okay men, young men and growing boys, there is an issue that needs to be addressed over and over again until your minds change about your health care. I am speaking to men in general. So if this message does not apply to you, please feel free to spread the word and pass on the following information to other men.

Here's the situation: All too often, men do not go to the doctor when they sense something is wrong with their bodies. Too often, men don't get an annual medical exam.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 3% of Hispanic men did not visit a health professional in the past 12 months, compared to 27% of African American men and 23% of Caucasian men. This behavior leads to diseases forming in the body that can be prevented.

A disease that has been diagnosed in many men who do not seek professional medical attention is BPH (Benign Prostate Hyperplasia). This is an ailment that affects nearly half of all men over 50 and 90% of all men 70 and older.

Although research suggest this is a disease of older men, I personally know men in their 20s and 30s who have these symptoms, as well as men in this same age range who have lived with and died from prostate cancer. Prostate Cancer is also high in low-income, uninsured men, according to the Department of Urology, David Geffen School of Medicine, and University of California-Los Angeles.

BPH occurs when the prostate becomes progressively enlarged. Symptoms of Benign Prostate Hyperplasia include frequent urination, the need to urinate at night and a feeling that your bladder is not empty after you have already urinated.

BPH is treatable if diagnosed early enough. If this condition is left untreated, a man can be at risk for such disorders as sexual dysfunction and damage to the liver and kidneys. Dr. R. Lawrence Hatchett M.D. states he has noticed that, "Rather than seeking medical attention men simply start to ignore certain activities . . ."

Another disease that men face because they fail to listen to their bodies and actively seek medical attention is heart disease. The Office of Minority Health reported in 2005, that African American men were 30% more likely to die from heart disease than were white men of non-Hispanic decent.

Heart disease includes all the diseases that affect the heart. Examples include heart attacks, congestive heart failure and congenital heart disease. I will briefly describe all three of these heart diseases.

A heart attack, also known as Myocardial Infarction, occurs when a part of the heart's blood supply is interrupted. A heart attack causes some of the heart's cells to die. This commonly occurs when there is a blockage- due to plaque- in an artery located in the heart.

Secondly, according to the American Heart Association, congestive heart failure occurs when the heart cannot effectively pump blood to the other organs of the body. This form of heart disease can be a consequence of narrowed heart arteries, past heart attacks, high blood pressure, birth defects and more.

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Finally, congenital heart disease is a condition of the heart that happens before birth. This defect of the heart affects approximately 9 of every 1000 children. In adults the symptoms include but are not limited to shortness of breath and limited ability to exercise.

WebMD reports, heart disease can be prevented by quitting smoking, lowering cholesterol, controlling your weight, maintaining healthy blood pressure, and exercising.

So gentlemen, at the least, please get your annual checkups. The women of the world's communities need our fathers, brothers, sons, friends, boyfriends, life partners and husbands. One checkup per year or when the symptoms occur can change and even save your lives.

10 recession-proof stress relievers that cost little or nothing

- Stretch/Yoga - calms the mind body and spirit, improves circulation, releases tension, tones the body!
- Warm Bubble Bath or Shower - relaxes the muscles, creates quiet time for yourself (don't forget the oils and candles)!
- Journaling - gets important issues off your chest, releasing it into the universe!
- Walk or Run - helps you "Breathe, Stretch, Shake, Let it Go"!
- Meditate - creates mental focus, blocking out negativity, by focusing your mind on positive things that make you happy!
- Get a Massage - releases muscle tension, just ask a friend or loved one, or child for this service!

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- Dance - to you favorite song, getting your blood flowing and releasing stress and tension!
- Talk - talk it out to someone you trust! Let it Go!
- Listen to Music - with a positive message that leads to reduced stress!
- Count - backward from 10. Slowly, Slowly and repeat!

Brandi Patterson Phillips is a freelance health and wellness reporter with an extensive background in mental and physical health training and education. She is also a Life Skills Coach, fitness trainer and professional dancer. She is currently studying for her M.B.A. at St. Mary's University in Minneapolis. Brandi currently teaches at Creative Arts High School in St. Paul, MN, Summit Early Learning Center in Minneapolis, and is president of the Minnesota Fit Club for Women. Please direct all health and wellness questions to bodybybrandiva@gmail.com. Answers will be chosen to appear in subsequent Insight News editions.