

Summer 2001

your Health Matters

**Defibrillators
can save lives**

**Men's health
concerns**

**Kids' sleep
disorders**

ALL SAINTS



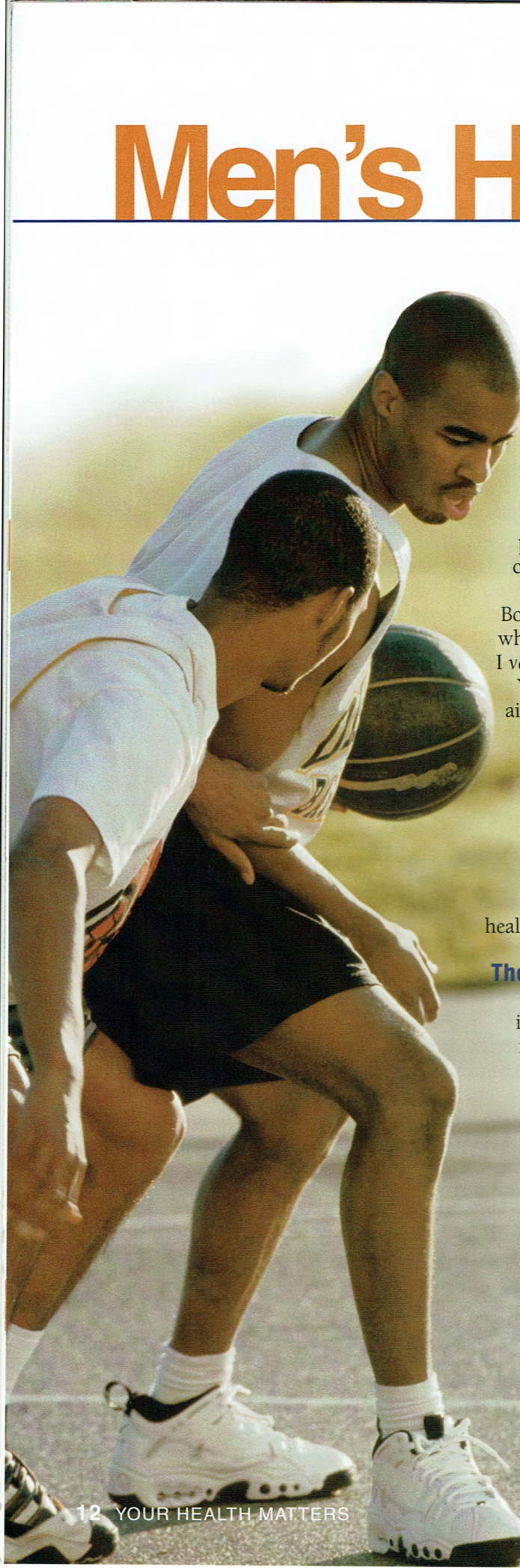
HEALTHCARE

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Men's Health

Concerns



It's a "guy thing"—unfortunately. Studies show that men are less likely to have a regular physician or to be concerned with disease prevention than women. Too often, men ignore their health until illness all but forces them to visit their doctor. Men's reluctance to go to the doctor is often something that people joke about. But neglecting healthcare can have serious consequences for men.

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," according to Bogdan Pudzisz, MD, an All Saints–St. Mary's Medical Group physician who practices at our Sturtevant site. "My father died of colon cancer, so I *very much* stress screening tests."

You may ask "Who has time to see a doctor?" with a seemingly minor ailment, or just because it's time for a checkup or screening, when there are only 24 hours in a day? But men, like women, need to realize that the time they spend on medical care, as well as self-examinations, will be on their side in the years to come. Many health problems are most easily treated if caught early.

In their early stages, conditions such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, and heart disease may not have any symptoms. That's why checkups and screenings are essential for both men and women. And men, like women, have gender-specific health needs as well.

The Problematic Prostate

The prostate gland, located behind the bladder in men, plays an important role in contributing fluids to the semen. Prostatitis, an inflammation of the gland, can affect men of any age. Benign prostatic hypertrophy (BPH), more commonly known as an "enlarged" prostate, affects half of men in their 50s and 60s. Prostatitis and BPH have similar symptoms, including pain, a frequent and urgent need to urinate, and difficulty starting urination. These diseases are not life-threatening, but they need to be addressed. Untreated BPH can lead to bladder or kidney damage.

One in five American men will eventually develop invasive prostate cancer, the second most common cancer (behind lung cancer) in men. It is often slow-growing, with few if any symptoms in early stages. Just as women should be screened regularly for breast cancer, men need to be tested for prostate cancer. Doctors recommend that men have both the digital rectal exam (DRE) and the prostate specific antigen (PSA) blood test to detect prostate cancer early. The PSA test measures genetic "markers" of prostate cancer in the blood.

A diagnosis of prostate cancer is not a death sentence.

If the cancer is detected early—before it spreads to other parts of the body—it can be treated successfully with surgery or radiation. For some older patients, nothing more than “watchful waiting” is prescribed, because the cancer develops so slowly. “It’s always best to find lesions in the early stages,” Dr. Pudzisz says, “when a cure is possible.”

Testicular Cancer

Another key health concern that men need to be aware of is cancer of the testicles. This cancer most often strikes young men between 20 and 40, but men of all ages should consider it a serious threat. Testicular cancer usually starts with a small, firm lump on one of the testicles. Although not all lumps are malignant tumors, any changes in the testicles should be brought to a doctor’s attention. “I realize that it’s difficult, but patients should feel comfortable bringing these issues up with their physician,” Dr. Pudzisz says.

In addition, just as women should make monthly breast self-exams part of their routine, men should examine their testicles for signs of cancer once a month. All males over age 15 should perform the following self-exam after a shower:

- Hold the testicles in one hand, and feel each with the other hand.
- Roll each testicle gently between thumb and fingers. Locate the epididymis, the smooth tube-like structure that covers each testicle in the front, back, and bottom. Gently separate the epididymis from the testicle.
- Feel for any swelling or lumps, or anything that seems different than it was last month.

Slay the Stereotype

The screenings in the chart below, organized by age group, can help men reduce their risk for serious illness. Discuss them with your Medical Group physician; your medical or family history could affect their recommended frequency.

“Many men are more worried about keeping their car running well than doing preventive care,” Dr. Pudzisz laments. “But just like cars need oil changes, bodies need check-ups.”

Men, refuse to be part of the stereotype of the male who avoids preventive healthcare! Ask any woman: real men know how to preserve their health. Now, if we could just get you to ask for directions when you’re lost....



AGES	Preventive Health Assessment	Cholesterol Screen	Skin Self-Exam	Testicular Self-Exam	Testicular Exam by Physician	Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA)	Digital Rectal Exam (DRE)	Flexible Sigmoidoscopy (colorectal cancer test)	Fecal Occult Blood Test (FOBT)	Fasting Blood Sugar (FBS)
18-39	every 1-3 years	every 5 years	monthly	monthly	every 1-3 years					every 5 years
40-49	every 1-3 years	every 5 years	monthly	monthly	every 1-3 years	upon physician request	every 1-3 years	upon physician request		every 5 years
50-59	every 1-3 years	every 5 years	monthly	monthly	every 1-3 years	annually	every 1-3 years	every 5 years	annually	every 5 years
60+	annually	every 3 years	monthly	monthly	annually	annually	annually	every 5 years	annually	every 5 years