

A Picture of Health

In focus this month: Men's Health

In Public Health we look at the way people in Tameside live as a whole population. This helps us understand what the main health and wellbeing challenges are for people living here, so we can look for ways to improve levels of health. We'll be sharing facts and figures about health in Tameside with you every month, to put you in the picture. We'll also be giving you information on how you can help yourself and the people around you to live well.

1 We're all for equality between the sexes, but it's important to acknowledge that men and women are built differently and behave differently. There are some conditions men are more susceptible to than women, their experiences of them may be different, and there are some diseases only men can have. There are over 105,000 men in Tameside who on average live 3.5 years less than women, so let's take a look at the ways men can protect their health and give the women a run for their money.



5 Bowel cancer has become much more common in men than in women in recent years. Obesity is a big factor, increasing the risk of developing bowel cancer by a massive 50%. The advice, as always, is eat less and move more to protect your health. You also need to be aware of the signs; blood in your poo is just one. Click below to learn about the others, and if you're between 60 and 74 and worried, call 0800 707 60 60 for a free home testing kit.



9 Gay and bisexual men in Tameside can be at higher risk of poor emotional health. For men who prefer to speak to someone from an LGBT organisation, the LGBT Foundation is there to listen, and to provide advice, support and information.

LGBT
foundation



13 Guys, you don't have to don spandex and bench twice your body weight to benefit from upping your physical activity. Just moving a little more every day can help reduce your chance of diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and a whole host of other health problems. November has become synonymous with Movember, the month when moustaches make a comeback to raise funds for men's health. This year Movember isn't just about cultivating a furry face. It's also about a trying 30 days of increased physical activity, so don't just grow your mo', find your get up and go.



2 No men's health month would be complete without talking balls. Football that is. Men tend to make fewer social connections as they get older. This can lead to loneliness, which isn't so good for your health. Tameside gents can tackle this by joining their local Walking Football team. It's a slower version of the beautiful game with strictly no running. It's aimed at men 50 and over to have a laugh and meet new people, but it's also a chance to get some gentle exercise too.



6 Research tells us men are less likely to talk about their feelings than women. It's difficult to know whether men naturally internalise their emotions, or whether social traditions mean they feel less comfortable speaking out. Either way, it makes for a noticeable difference in the way men cope with feelings of stress, depression and anxiety. For men who want to talk about their feelings our local mental health service provider offers a range of support.



10 Some men are more likely to be exposed to HIV than others. In Tameside, gay and bisexual men are at the highest risk of acquiring HIV through sex. The last week of November marks National HIV Testing Week. Around a 5th of people living with HIV in the UK are unaware of their infection, so if you or someone you know thinks they may have been at risk through unprotected sex, now's a good time to get checked. Free condoms and testing for sexually transmitted infections and HIV are available at the Orange Rooms in Ashton.



3 Testicular cancer is relatively uncommon, accounting for around 1% of all cancers in men. It is also the most treatable, with a 96% chance of being completely cured if caught in the early stages. A lump in the testicles is unlikely to be something serious, but it's really important to know what changes to look out for. Self-checking is a must, and is best done once a month, in the shower. Not sure how? Click to see a guide.



7 Whilst the old saying 'Boys don't cry' is being challenged more and more, bottling things up is a hard habit to break. Until men feel more able to speak openly about their feelings, we can all learn to understand when someone is having difficulties or feeling low. 'I had a black dog' is a good place to start learning about depression.



4 The prostate is a walnut sized gland found just below the bladder in men. It tends to grow larger with age, which for two thirds of men in their 50's causes no problems. For some though, it can be uncomfortable, affecting their sex life, and their ability to pee comfortably. It can also be a sign of cancer. The majority (80%) of prostate cancers grow very slowly, and may stay undiagnosed if causing no symptoms or problems. Nevertheless, it is not something to be ignored, so it's wise to be clued up about the symptoms. Although a few men balk at the thought of a trip to the doc, every year lots of men get their prostate checked by their GP. If you are concerned, don't delay as there are a couple of painless tests that will be able to identify any issue.



8 It's a truly miserable fact that men are three times more likely to take their own lives than women. Around 20 men in Tameside die each year, and a further number make a serious attempt to end their life. Feeling like there is no-one to turn to is a real danger to someone in the midst of an emotional crisis. If suicidal thoughts ever cross your mind there is someone to talk to. The Sanctuary offer 24-hour mental health crisis support, and a place to go for anyone who is struggling to get through the night. Save this number in your phone in case you or someone you know ever needs it in a crisis 0300 003 7029. This service is for men AND women (aged 18+).



11 Anyone who has been on a stag do, or an all-day drinking session will know that the last man standing goes down as a legend with the lads. Whilst it's all fun and games the fallout from being a big boozer comes in many forms. From belts buckling under the pressure of beer bellies, to developing moobs or being a flop in the bedroom, there are lots of reasons to cut back. These are just some of the noticeable effects, but prolonged excessive use of alcohol can lead to heart disease, cancer and stroke; the big killers of men in Tameside, with 4000 hospital episodes for men relating to alcohol.



Try taking two alcohol free days a week to give your body a break.



12 It's safe to say that some men are expert salad dodgers, but let's be realistic. Not many people will opt for a quinoa and goji berry protein pot when there's a kebab on offer. But speaking of being realistic, we can't ignore the fact more men in Tameside are living with heart disease than they should, and eating badly is partly to blame. When it comes to the effects of a lifetime of unhealthy eating; you can run but you can't hide. It will catch up with you eventually. Eating better doesn't have to mean rabbit food, but a few wise choices in the here and now could avoid a stay on the cardiac ward in later life.



14 There are more than 24,000 men in Tameside using tobacco regularly. This month we're not going to bang on about how it kills (we know you know that already). Smoking hits men where it hurts. It alters male sex hormones, so those exposed to high levels of cigarette smoke show poor sperm quality and may find it difficult to get an erection. It also doubles your risk of developing testicular cancer. If living with cancer and heart disease isn't enough to put you off, maybe the thought of losing your sex life is.

