

Men's Health



Take Time to Exercise

Experts tell us that engaging in physical activity serves as a vital safeguard against heart disease and stroke.

The advantages of exercise, however, extend well beyond physical well-being. Here are the benefits to taking time to exercise.

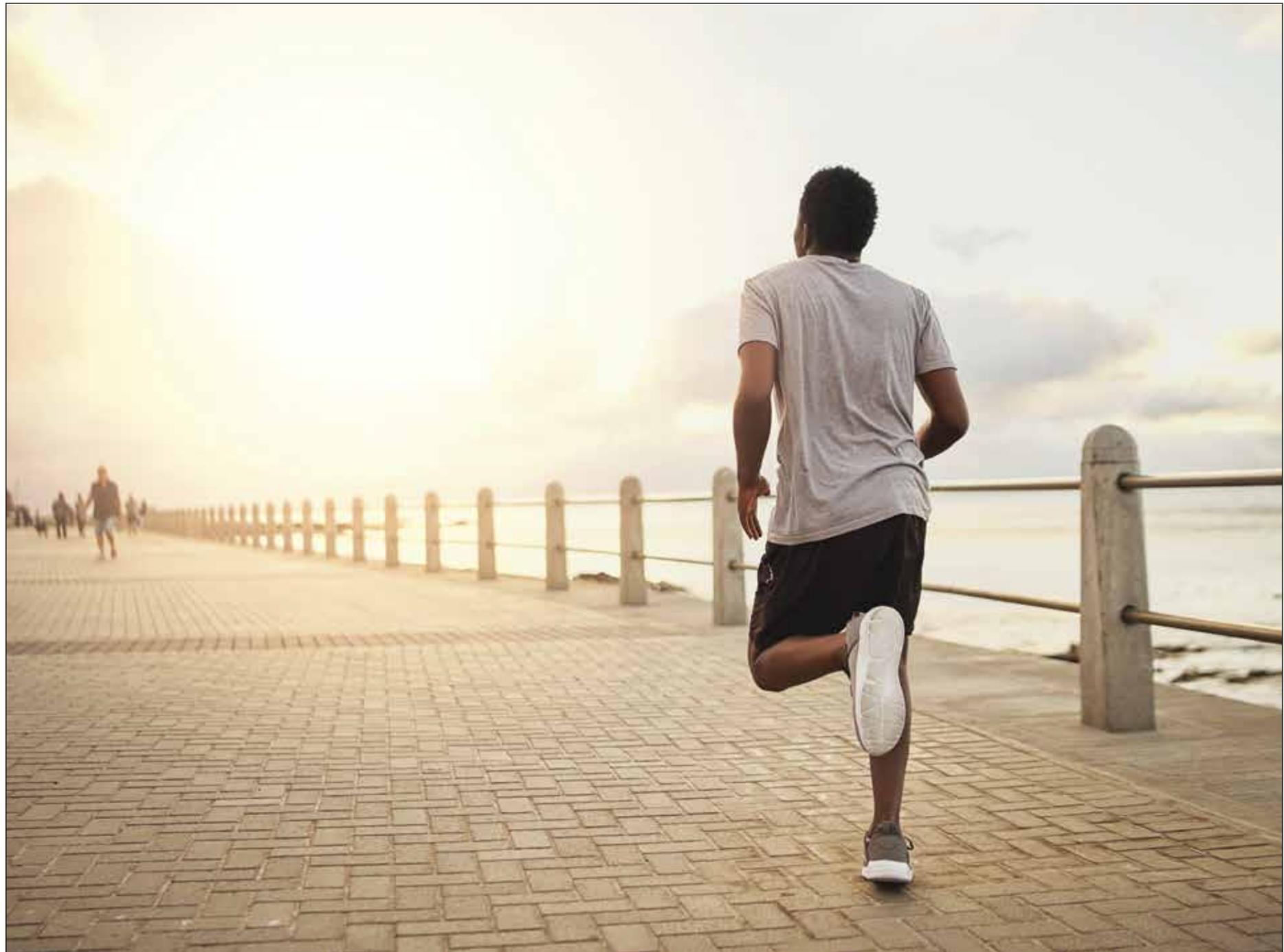
STAYING ACTIVE

Beyond protecting us from certain physical health issues, regular exercise can help alleviate stress and enhance self-esteem. Research indicates that just an hour of walking or running for just 15 minutes daily can help reduce symptoms of depression.

Doctors now say that even short five-minute bursts of activity scattered throughout the day can elevate our mood. Studies show that active individuals can experience more than 40% fewer days of poor mental health each year. Despite this, government data shows that fewer than 25% of men engaged in exercise, recreational activities or sports on a daily basis.

KNOW THE RECOMMENDATIONS

Guidelines suggest aiming for 150 minutes of weekly moderate-intensity exercise. Moderate is defined as activity which is vigorous enough that singing becomes challenging.



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Examples include cycling, participating in water aerobics and brisk walking. For those seeking more intense workouts, 75 minutes of vigorous activity can yield even greater health benefits. In this case, exercises would include basketball, tennis or running. Exercise to the point that you find it hard to speak more

than a few words without pausing for breath. Just 40 minutes of moderate to vigorous aerobic exercise three to four times a week can greatly improve cholesterol levels and blood pressure.

CREATING NEW HABITS

Regardless of the type of exercise, start gradually

— especially if you've been living a mostly inactive lifestyle. The initial phase carries a higher risk for both burnout and injury. Begin by dedicating five minutes each workday to your exercise routine, and then increase the duration weekly for a month. As your body adapts, up your 20-minute sessions to 30 minutes by

the fifth week. Incrementally progressing with your exercise plan will help you more easily achieve a full hour within two months, and should make it easier to enjoy the process. If an uninterrupted hour is difficult to schedule around your busy day, break up the routine into shorter segments.

You and Your Heart

Cutting-edge medications for heart disease have proven effective. Maintaining good heart health, however, ultimately hinges on smart choices about nutrition and exercise, while following your doctor's advice.

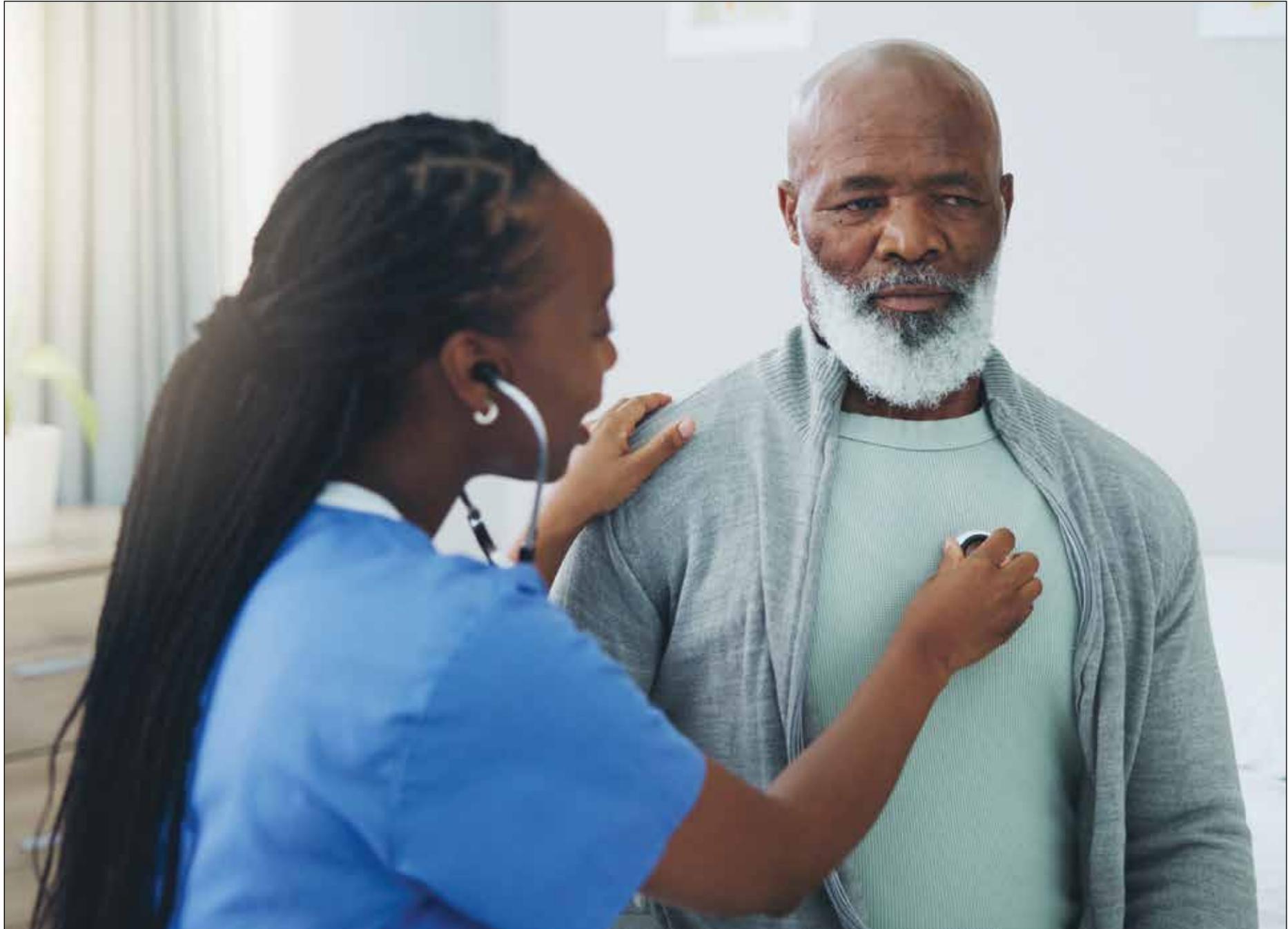
Here are some essential steps to help you improve your heart health.

GET ACTIVE

Regular physical activity offers many advantages, not least of which is better heart health. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise each week, or 75 minutes of vigorous activity. Even moderate activities like walking can significantly contribute to your overall health — including heart function.

Maintaining a healthy weight can keep your body flexible and your heart healthy. Pursuing cardiovascular goals set in partnership with your doctor can help you improve your circulation.

The good news is that you don't need to be an elite athlete to enjoy these benefits. Just follow the guidelines recommended by your doctor and the American Heart Association.



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MANAGE YOUR STRESS

High-stress environments can increase blood pressure, along with risk factors for heart attacks or stroke. Stress is also associated with harmful behaviors such as smoking, excessive drinking and overeating, all of which can negatively affect heart health. When stress is unavoidable, try to schedule parallel activities that

offer relaxation. For some, exercise can be an effective outlet, while others may find relief in hobbies, leisure activities or clubs. Practices like meditation, yoga or prayer can bring down stress levels. If none of these help, discuss your feelings with a mental health professional. Therapy has benefitted many men by teaching them how to cope

better with these challenges.

QUIT SMOKING

Smoking remains a significant risk factor for high blood pressure. It's important to quit smoking immediately — and it's better still to not start at all.

Elevated blood pressure plays a role in many heart attacks and strokes. If you have attempted to quit but found it

difficult, experts like the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services provide free advice and a helpful guide to find local support. Visit <https://bit.ly/3OG1TUM> for more information. There are also professionals available to assist you, along with new medication options that may support you in your journey toward a smoke-free life.

The Importance of Screening

Colorectal cancer claims the lives of tens of thousands of Americans annually.

Despite various awareness campaigns, more than one in every 23 men will be diagnosed with potentially life-threatening colorectal cancer in their lifetimes. This disease is the third most common cause of cancer-related fatalities among men.

Early detection plays a crucial role in saving lives, and it all begins with making healthier lifestyle decisions. Schedule regular screenings once you reach middle age to safeguard your health, and educate yourself about the symptoms and the ways that healthy choices can reduce your risks.

REGULAR APPOINTMENTS

Experts say men who have an average risk for colon cancer should start getting screened at the age of 50. Typically, these screenings are carried out every 10 years. Those who fall into higher risk categories, such as individuals with a family history of colorectal cancer, may need to begin screenings earlier and undergo them more frequently.

Prior to the colonoscopy, you will be instructed to completely clear your system, which means fasting from solid foods for the day before the procedure.



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HOW IT WORKS

Doctors use colonoscopes equipped with a light and video camera to detect polyps, which are small growths that could potentially turn cancerous. If they are discovered, the polyps will be removed and sent for a biopsy to see whether cancer or malignant growth is present.

The procedure is performed while the patient is under

moderate or deep sedation. The entire process takes approximately 30 minutes, and recovery usually occurs within a few hours.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

A colonoscopy is the only method where a doctor can identify colon cancer in its early stages. This provides patients with the best opportunity for effective treatment

and the possibility of complete recovery.

If the cancer progresses beyond the early phases, you may encounter telltale symptoms including the presence of blood in the stool or on the underwear, persistent abdominal pain and unexplained weight loss. Anyone experiencing these symptoms should seek prompt medical care.

HEALTHY HABITS

Make sure you're drinking enough water and maintaining a routine of regular exercise. Health professionals suggest consuming a minimum of 32 grams of dietary fiber each day. They also advise patients to moderate consumption of caffeine and alcohol. Consistent, painless bowel movements are a positive sign of good health.

Watch Your Caffeine Intake

It's easy to seek out a cup of coffee or a soda when your physical or mental energy begins to drag. An over-reliance on caffeine, however, can put your health at risk.

POSITIVE IMPACTS

Government experts report that approximately 80% of adults in the U.S. consume caffeine in some way daily. The stimulating properties of caffeine affect our nervous system right away, reaching their peak around an hour after intake. In at least one respect, that's a good thing: New research indicates that moderate caffeine intake may help reduce the risk of dementia.

Among surveyed adults ages 65 and above, those who drank two to three 8-ounce cups of coffee daily for 10 years exhibited fewer memory loss symptoms. In contrast, those consuming half a cup or less showed more signs of dementia. Related research has also revealed that men who consume four cups of coffee per day have a 50% lower chance of developing Parkinson's disease.

OTHER EFFECTS

At the same time, however, there are significant drawbacks. Caffeine can also adversely affect heart health. Reactions can significantly vary among different men, but



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certain facts have been established by health experts: High caffeine doses may temporarily raise both heart rate and blood pressure, and that can be concerning for individuals with preexisting cardiopulmonary issues.

Consistent caffeine intake for

healthy individuals seldom results in irregular heart rhythms.

KEEP AN EYE OUT

If you are concerned about how caffeine may affect your heart, talk to your doctor. They'll discuss your caffeine

consumption levels and provide insights on managing your caffeine intake to safeguard your overall health and well-being. Most recommend steering clear of highly caffeinated energy drinks, as these are linked with a higher incidence of abnormal

electrocardiograms compared to black coffee and other teas.

Your body manages to process as much as 50% of caffeine intake within approximately four to six hours. Still, caffeine undeniably contributes to increased blood pressure, so watch your intake.



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Focus on Eating Well

You may not be ready to go all-in on a plant-based diet, featuring only vegetables, beans, nuts, fruits, seeds and whole grains. But even a partial shift toward a plant-forward diet can make a big difference in your life.

You can still include other favorite food types, if you don't want to fully embrace vegetarianism or veganism, while enjoying many health advantages of cutting down on meat and dairy.

A RISING TREND

Medical professionals indicate that adopting plant-based diets can greatly improve health conditions such as Type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure, potentially even decreasing the need for medication.

Research continues to support the notion that these diets are beneficial for overall well-being, even for those who do not consume exclusively plant foods.

Meanwhile, plant-based diets have entered the mainstream, aided by a series of influential documentaries. More men are learning how these dietary habits can positively impact heart health and weight management, while also playing a big role in environmental sustainability.

BEGINNING THE JOURNEY

If you are hesitant about becoming a vegetarian or vegan, consider gradually incorporating more plant-based options into your meals. Ease into it at your own comfortable pace.

Begin by familiarizing yourself with the key terms: Vegetarians consume plant-based proteins while avoiding

meats such as beef, poultry and pork. They still include eggs, cheese and milk in their diets.

On the other hand, vegans maintain a diet strictly composed of plants. That excludes all animal products, including meat, dairy, honey, eggs or fish.

ADAPTABLE CHOICES

Ready to get started? Try a “flexitarian diet,” which emphasizes plant foods but minimizes rather than eliminates animal product consumption.

This approach serves as an excellent way to transition toward healthier eating — and perhaps, down the road, toward vegetarianism or

veganism.

Just gradually substitute plant-based foods for animal proteins, dairy, processed items and fried foods.

GAUGING YOUR SUCCESS

Look for small, positive health changes as you incorporate more plant-based, unprocessed options into your diet.

You can expect improvements in key health indicators such as cholesterol levels, body mass index and blood pressure.

Simply improving dietary habits may also lead to a decreased reliance on medications designed for heart disease and other chronic conditions.

Managing a Migraine

Migraines arrive with sudden force, potentially derailing your life. Here are some strategies for managing a migraine when it strikes.

INSIDE THE NUMBERS

Recent findings indicate that headaches now affect nearly 75% of adults between the ages of 18 and 65. Among those sufferers, about 30% reported experiencing the more serious form of headache described as a migraine. As many as 4% of adults worldwide suffered from headaches on 15 or more occasions each month. Taken together, migraines rank as the sixth most common cause of lost productivity due to disabilities across the globe.

AVOIDING TRIGGERS

Most migraines tend to be localized, usually triggered by specific factors. Try to steer clear of triggers such as dehydration, bright lighting and strong odors that could provoke a migraine. For those who experience chronic migraines, making small lifestyle adjustments may lead to big improvements.

Experts recommend adhering to a routine in order to reduce stress, which is a common headache trigger.

Be sure to get adequate rest and be cautious with sudden movements or activities that could induce motion sickness.



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ALWAYS BE PREPARED

Sometimes external factors, like changes in the weather, are beyond your direct control. Still, once you have pinpointed these individual triggers, you can equip yourself to handle them better, regardless of whether you can control them. Make sure your pain-relief medications are easily

accessible. If a trigger occurs, quickly move to minimize any of the sensory distractions around you. This might involve closing your bedroom or office door to lessen noise, or adjusting blinds and dimming lights.

ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES

If conventional treatments prove ineffective, consider

exploring alternative methods, such as meditation or acupuncture. You might find relief by lying in a darkened, cool space, practicing deep breathing exercises, using cold compresses or employing relaxation strategies. New research indicates that those who incorporate yoga into their treatment plans

experience fewer or less severe migraines than those who didn't.

Consider adding supplements or vitamins to your daily regimen, but talk to your doctor first to ensure they're compatible with your current medications. Your physician may also suggest other treatment options.

Don't Forget Your Skin

Men are generally at greater risk of melanoma, along with various skin cancers, because they don't consider the risks.

Many also let the condition go untreated. Early identification saves lives.

Experts say men under 49 years of age are more likely to develop melanoma than they are to get any other form of cancer. Within this demographic, men aged 15 to 39 are particularly vulnerable: They have a 55% higher probability of succumbing to melanoma than their female counterparts.

So, what should you do? Taking preventive measures before sun exposure can significantly reduce the likelihood of developing this disease. Regular doctor's visits can also help with early detection.

SOBERING STATISTICS

By the time they reach 50, men are already at a higher risk of melanoma compared to women. One reason: Studies confirmed that men tend to be less aware of the risks posed by the sun.

Men's skin also has a higher concentration of collagen and elastin, making it more susceptible to the harmful effects of UV rays.

Basal cell carcinoma is the most prevalent type of skin cancer.



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THE BIGGEST RISKS

When talking to your doctor about your health, remember to disclose everything you know about your relatives' experiences with cancer. Doctors say that having an accurate, in-depth family history — in particular with something like basal cell carcinoma — can allow them to create a personalized plan that reduces

a patient's risk of skin cancer. This includes determining how often screening is necessary. This in-depth genetic perspective allows them to formulate a personalized plan of protection, including more regular screenings. In addition to these genetic factors, men with a personal history of cancer face approximately a 20% chance of recurrence within

the first year following diagnosis.

WHAT TO DO

To prevent skin cancer, routine health check-ups are crucial for identifying and addressing the disease in its early stages.

It's also important to take protective measures when spending time outside.

Sometimes, complete avoidance of sunlight isn't feasible, of course, so apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher on any exposed areas. When swimming, use water-resistant protection to maintain a barrier.

Additional measures include wearing UV-blocking sunglasses and a wide-brimmed hat.