

Natural Medicine Is For Men Too!

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Research has shown that women are much greater consumers of natural healthcare than men. This should not be the case, as preventive natural health measures are just as beneficial to men. The most common diseases affecting Canadian men include heart disease, stroke, cancer and diabetes. By utilizing natural medicine, much can be done to prevent these diseases from ever occurring.

Heart Disease and Stroke

Most men are unaware that they usually develop heart disease 10 to 15 years earlier than women do, making it more likely to strike in the prime of their lives. Therefore beginning preventive measures early is especially important for men. There are several things that men can do to reduce the risk of cardiovascular diseases such as heart attacks and strokes. Avoiding high blood pressure (hypertension) through regular checks and appropriate treatment eliminates the leading cause of strokes. Maintaining a healthy weight and normal blood sugar through regular aerobic exercise and eating a balanced diet significantly lowers heart disease risk. Daily fish oil and B-complex supplementation may also reduce this risk.


Cancer

The most common cancers in men are lung, prostate and colon. 90% of lung cancer is associated with smoking, so avoiding tobacco use is essential to minimize risk. It is also important to avoid exposure to cancer-causing substances (carcinogens) in the home or workplace and to undergo periodic naturopathic detoxification protocols if exposure levels are high. Regular health screenings can also detect cancer in its earliest stage when it is most treatable. A diet rich in fruits and vegetables can also provide antioxidants to help prevent the free radical damage associated with cancer.

Diabetes

It is estimated that one-third of men with the most common form of diabetes (Type 2 or Non-insulin Dependent) are not aware they have the disease until they develop complications such as nerve damage, vision loss or kidney disease. In addition to these complications, diabetic men have three times the risk of heart disease and stroke than their non-diabetic counterparts. The incidence of diabetes in men is skyrocketing due to increasingly poor diets and sedentary lifestyles. Naturopathic physicians can provide the attention and coaching necessary to successfully manage diabetes.

Lab Testing for Prevention and Early Diagnosis

There are now several methods available from naturopathic physicians to detect early signs of the above illnesses in men. Blood tests for C-Reactive Protein, Homocysteine and Lipoprotein A can help assess heart disease risk. A breath test for insulin resistance called the DiaTest can identify the earliest signs of diabetes. Regular physical exams including blood pressure testing are also essential to ensure continued optimal health. 

References:

1. Men's top 10 health threats: Mostly preventable, Mayo Clinic 2003.
2. Yarnell. Naturopathic Urology & Men's Health. Wenatchee, WA. Healing Mountain Publishing 2001.



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