

Physicians at Atrium Health Navicent Offer Tips to Improve Men's Health

June is National Men's Health Month

MACON, Ga., June 13, 2024 – The community is invited to join Atrium Health Navicent in recognizing the month of June as National Men's Health Month. This month is an opportunity to start a conversation with fathers, brothers, sons or friends about ways men can live longer and healthier lives.

Doctors at Atrium Health Navicent encourage men to use this month to reflect on their individual health needs and take steps to improve their overall health. Whether you continue current activities or find new ones, now is a great time to focus on better health, especially for men with underlying health conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, obesity, and cardiovascular and respiratory conditions. Men are urged to ensure they are current on annual physicals, blood work and recommended screenings.

"This month is a great reminder for men to get back on track with regular visits to the doctor, and to catch up on any recommended screenings," said [Dr. David Armstrong](#), an Atrium Health Navicent colorectal surgeon. "If you do have cancer, or another health condition, early detection through screenings and routine doctor visits put you in the best possible position for treatment and better outcomes."

Atrium Health Navicent offers the following eight tips to help improve men's health:

1. Visit the doctor

Regular exams and screenings can increase the chances of early detection of disease or chronic conditions. See your doctor annually for routine blood work, immunization updates, blood pressure and cholesterol checks as well as testicular exams. Knowing your numbers — blood pressure, BMI, triglycerides and cholesterol, just to name a few — is a valuable insight into the current state of your health. If it's been a while since you've had these tests, reach out to your doctor to get started. Having a consistent physician who sees you regularly and understands your risk factors and lifestyle is key to detecting any changes in your overall well-being. If you don't have a doctor, visit www.NavicentHealth.org and click "Find A Doctor."

2. Stay on track with preventative screenings

Talk to your doctor about how often you should have the following screenings based on your risk factors, age and family history:

- **Prostate cancer:** The American Cancer Society (ACS) recommends that men over 45 talk to their doctors about getting a baseline Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) test, and men ages 55-69 should consider getting screened annually, especially if they have a family history of prostate cancer.
- **Colorectal cancer:** For individuals of average risk, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends screening for colorectal cancer starting at age 45 and continuing until age 75. However, you may need to start getting tested before age 45, or more often than other people, if you have inflammatory bowel disease or a family history of colorectal cancer or colorectal polyps. The decision to be screened between ages 76 and 85 should be made on an individual basis by talking to your doctor.
- **Osteoporosis:** If you are age 50 to 64 and have risk factors for osteoporosis, you should discuss screening with your doctor. Risk factors can include long-term steroid use, low body weight, smoking, heavy alcohol use, having a bone fracture after age 50, or a family history of hip fracture or osteoporosis.

3. Be heart smart

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that 695,000 people in the U.S. die of heart disease each year – approximately 1 in every 5 deaths. Deaths related to heart disease are particularly high in Georgia and the Southeast, which is why taking care of your heart through healthy habits and regular examinations is key to prevention. To help prevent heart disease, eat foods high in fiber and low in saturated fats, trans fat and cholesterol. Limit sodium and sugar intake.

4. Perform testicular self-exams

Most testicular cancers can be found at an early stage by noticing a lump on the testicle or observing that one testicle is swollen or larger than normal. Some doctors recommend that all men examine their testicles monthly after puberty. However, because regular testicular self-exams have not been studied enough to know if they reduce the death rate from this cancer, the ACS does not have a recommendation for how often testicular self-exams should be performed. The ACS has [this guide](#) on how to perform a proper self-exam.

5. Fine-tune your diet

While the right diet for you may depend on your specific restrictions or health needs, most people benefit from a diet rich in fruits and vegetables, whole grains, plant-based or lean animal protein and heart-healthy fats. Cut down on processed foods, sugar, salt and saturated fat. Your doctor will be able to recommend a plan that is right for you based on your current health status. A daily multivitamin can help fill in the gaps in the areas where your diet may be lacking. Talk to your doctor about vitamins or supplements that may be right for you and ask for blood work if you have specific concerns about deficiencies.

6. Kick bad habits

If you haven't already, take steps to let go of poor habits that can be detrimental to your health as you age. This includes smoking, excessive alcohol use, recreational drug use and a sedentary lifestyle. Smoking is linked to a myriad of health concerns including an increased risk of developing lung and heart disease, and men who have more than two alcoholic drinks daily are at higher risk for certain diseases, such as cancer. Talk to your doctor about smoking cessation options that may be right for you and aim to cut back alcohol a few nights a week.

7. Exercise regularly

Exercise boosts your heart health, builds muscle, strengthens your bones and helps to ward off health problems. Taking small steps toward a more active lifestyle, like taking the stairs instead of the elevator, will benefit your body. Aim for at least 30 minutes of exercise per day and work your way up. Even those who have health- or age-related limitations, such as arthritis or osteoporosis, can benefit from modified, low-impact exercise. Talk to your doctor about activities that are appropriate for you.

8. Manage your stress

Chronic stress wreaks havoc on a person's physical and emotional well-being. Take time to relax and unwind, whether that means indulging in a good book, enjoying a workout or meditating. A good night's sleep helps fight the signs of aging and is important for stress management. Sleep disturbances are a common complaint in midlife, so be sure to mention this to your doctor to discuss management options. If you are experiencing stress not managed with lifestyle changes, don't be afraid to reach out for professional help.

About Atrium Health Navicent

Atrium Health Navicent is the leading provider of health care in central and south Georgia and is committed to its mission of elevating health and well-being through compassionate care. Atrium Health Navicent is part of [Advocate Health](#), which is headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina, and is the third-largest nonprofit health system in the United States, created from the combination of Atrium Health and Advocate Aurora Health. Atrium Health Navicent provides high-quality, personalized care in 53 specialties at more than 50 facilities throughout the region. As part of the largest, integrated, nonprofit health system in the Southeast, it is also able to tap into some of the nation's leading medical experts and specialists with Atrium Health, allowing it to provide the best care close to home – including advanced innovations in virtual medicine and care. Throughout its 125-year history in the community, Atrium Health Navicent has remained dedicated to enhancing health and wellness for individuals throughout the region through nationally recognized quality care, community health initiatives and collaborative partnerships. It is also one of the leading teaching hospitals in the region, helping to ensure viability for rural health care for the next generation. For more information, please visit www.NavicentHealth.org.

About Advocate Health

[Advocate Health](#) is the third-largest nonprofit integrated health system in the United States – created from the combination of Advocate Aurora Health and [Atrium Health](#). Providing care under the names [Advocate Health Care](#) in Illinois, Atrium Health in the Carolinas, Georgia and Alabama, and [Aurora Health Care](#) in Wisconsin, Advocate Health is a national leader in clinical innovation, health outcomes, consumer experience and value-based care, with [Wake Forest University School of Medicine](#) serving as the academic core of the enterprise. Headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina, Advocate Health serves nearly 6 million patients and is engaged in hundreds of clinical trials and research studies. It is nationally recognized for its expertise in cardiology, neurosciences, oncology, pediatrics and rehabilitation, as well as organ transplants, burn treatments and specialized musculoskeletal programs. Advocate Health employs 155,000 team members across 69 hospitals and over 1,000 care locations and offers one of the nation's largest graduate medical education programs with over 2,000 residents and fellows across more than 200 programs. Committed to equitable care for all, Advocate Health provides nearly \$6 billion in annual community benefits.

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