

Mens' Unique Health Priorities One ND's Point Of View

Men function differently than women. I've always had trouble verbalizing exactly how, but the differences are obvious when I'm providing care.

One difference that's easy to describe is that, generally, a man's top priority is function as opposed to how his body feels.

Another difference is that the information a man shares with me tends to be a little more direct and to the point, which I appreciate very much.

I'm sure you have pretty good idea of what's on the list of Top Man-Killers in Canada, so I'll spare you the lecture.

I won't go on and on about the liver either, but there are a few pieces of information you may find helpful.

Detox is a popular word these days. But what does it really mean? Lets start with the basics. Think of the liver and kidneys as filtration systems. We have 6 main ways to eliminate toxins from our system: pooping, peeing, sweating, exhaling/coughing/sneezing, blowing out mucus, and blowing off steam.

In case you didn't catch that, the nervous system is one of our systems of elimination. If you don't believe me, just watch a kid who's been fed too much sugar or food colouring.

For men, sweating and pooping are a big deal with regard to detox and elimination. I've noticed that, particularly for men working in the automotive industry, sweating seems to be a major method of detox for the body. I wonder if that has to do with the types of chemical fluids men in this industry are exposed to.

I've observed that past indulgences can come back to haunt us. I've seen this in a much more obvious way in men. If you used to get drunk quite often earlier in life, you can develop a kind of intolerance to alcohol later on. This goes for recreational drugs as well. The most common symptoms I've come across have been vertigo, stubborn skin rashes, heart palpitations, and anxiety. Some of my patients have had to stop consuming their substance of choice completely.

Research has shown that more men wind up on dialysis than women. I see kidney dysfunction often. Mild to moderate kidney dysfunction isn't all that bothersome, but once you pass a certain threshold, you have to limit potassium, sodium, and protein to an extreme degree. It really messes with quality of life and your ability to have optimal nutrition.

Make monitoring your kidneys a priority. Keep them strong for as long as you can.

Colon health is mentioned frequently in radio ads. The tissue of the colon can get irritated if semi-solid pieces of food are present in this region of the intestine. If irritation becomes chronic, tissue changes can develop to the point where abnormal cells start to grow, and risk of cancer becomes an issue.

Improperly digested food is an issue, so let's talk about the stomach. I personally don't see a whole lot of colon cancer, but I see a heck of a lot of stomach problems. Stomach ulcers, H.Pylori, gastritis, heartburn, and regurg. There is a lot that can be done about these things. In contrast, there's a lot less that can be done about colon cancer by the time it's discovered. Making the effort to correct stomach problems is, in my opinion, excellent prevention against one of our primary man killers.

No mens health blog would be complete with talking about erectile dysfunction. Did you know that it's not just age and stress that causes this problem? It's actually been correlated to elevated cholesterol levels and insulin resistance (which has to do with blood sugar). There are a few other factors involved, which I would be happy to talk to you about.

Lastly, muscle and joint pain. Function is THE priority. As a person who values self reliance to a high degree, I'm on a mission to keep people as independent as they can for as long as they can. If you're interested in learning very specific individualized skills to get your muscle and joint function back, I can help you with that. If you'd like a nice assertive acupuncture session to really get your body parts moving the way they should, I can help you with that too. When it comes to muscle and joint function, I don't give comfy cushy spa-like treatments. But I think you'll find that they're well worth it.

-Dr. Angela, ND