

## Symptoms Men Should Not Ignore

Men are less likely than women to visit the doctor, yet they're more likely to develop certain health issues. And there are symptoms you should never ignore. Something that seems like a minor problem might be a warning sign of a bigger health issue. Getting the right diagnosis is the best first step. Be sure to talk with your doctor if you notice any of the following symptoms.



### DIFFICULTY SWALLOWING

If you have a feeling of food stuck in your throat, it is time to see a doctor. Throat cancer is often caused by smoking and drinking. Causes for concern are a persistent sore throat, hoarseness that doesn't improve within two weeks, difficulty swallowing food or excess saliva, weight loss, trouble breathing, and coughing up blood.

### CHEST PAIN

This is one of the most common symptoms men ignore because men often believe chest pain is due to indigestion, stress, or lack of physical activity. Don't make excuses for yourself if you have chest pain. The American Heart Association says in addition to a heart attack, chest pain could be due to asthma, pneumonia, or even a condition like angina, which is an early sign of heart disease.

### BLEEDING

Blood in your urine could be a sign of urinary tract or prostate gland infection. Other possible causes are a tumor, injury, a kidney stone, or low blood platelet count. Blood in your stool or stool that looks darker than normal may be from bowel inflammation, an ulcer, hemorrhoids, or a bowel tumor. Coughing up blood may indicate lung cancer. Report any of these symptoms to your doctor as soon as possible.

### FATIGUE/IRRITABILITY

Fatigue, irritability, loss of interest in work, and trouble sleeping can be warning signs of depression in men. These symptoms usually linger for weeks at a time. Often, though, people don't recognize them. Some men don't seek help because they're hesitant to talk about their feelings. However, if you have any signs of depression, it's important to talk with your doctor or a therapist. Treatment can help ease your symptoms. It will help you regain interest in your job, family, and other activities.

## **DIZZINESS**

Dizziness can occur when you do not have enough blood flowing to your brain. If you are often feeling lightheaded and unsteady on your feet, a trip to your Primary Care Provider is warranted. It can be a symptom of serious health problems like heart disease or stroke.

## **SNORING**

Loud snoring can be a sign of sleep apnea, which is a sleep disorder linked to many health problems such as heart disease, stroke, and diabetes. About half the people who snore loudly have obstructive sleep apnea, the most common type. It causes your airway to collapse or become blocked while you sleep. This causes pauses in breathing that can occur many times an hour during sleep. Being overweight increases your risk. Lifestyle changes like weight loss may help. Some people need the help of a breathing device while they sleep. Others might need surgery to increase space and improve airflow through the upper airway.

## **SKIN CHANGES**

Check with your doctor or dermatologist if you find a new and oddly shaped freckle or mole. Also, if an existing mole changes in color or size or starts to bleed, it should be checked. These could all be signs of skin cancer. Men are typically at higher risk for skin cancer because they are more often outdoors and often don't think about applying sunscreen. Waiting to have skin changes checked out by a doctor can be dangerous — some forms of skin cancer are fatal. If found and treated early, though, many skin cancers can be cured.

## **UNEXPLAINED WEIGHT LOSS**

Losing a large amount of weight without trying could be a sign of a serious health issue. For instance, it could indicate diabetes, an overactive thyroid, or Crohn's disease. Cancer can also cause an unexpected loss of 10 pounds or more. In most cases, dramatic weight loss occurs in those with cancers of the pancreas, stomach, esophagus, or lung.

## **CHRONIC HEARTBURN**

Most people get heartburn or indigestion from time to time. But about 20 percent of Americans have a more serious and long-lasting type, called GERD, which stands for gastroesophageal reflux disease. If you have heartburn more than twice a week for a few weeks, you may have GERD. You should see your doctor. GERD that's not treated can lead to other problems, such as inflammation or narrowing of the esophagus, or even cancer of the esophagus. You could also breathe stomach acid into your lungs. That can cause breathing problems like asthma, wheezing, a sore throat, or laryngitis. If you have trouble swallowing or if you vomit fluid that is bloody, green, or yellow, seek immediate medical attention.

## TESTICLE CHANGES

Examine your testicles regularly and don't ignore any of the common warning signs of problems. These include redness, pain, lumps, or swelling. Because the testicles aren't protected by bone or muscle, they're more vulnerable to injury. They can also become inflamed or infected. It's rare, but symptoms could be signs of testicular cancer that's often treatable once it's diagnosed. Check in with your primary care doctor or urologist to find what's causing testicle changes.

## TROUBLE WITH MEMORY

It is not uncommon to experience some memory loss from time to time. Everyone forgets where the phone has been placed or the name of a special person at times. However, if you suddenly find yourself forgetting many things that you should know, it's time to see a health care provider. This could be a sign of Alzheimer's disease or some other type of dementia. It could be a sign of an infection or a nutritional deficiency. It may even be a sign that you've had a stroke.

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This is not an all-inclusive list of men's health issues, but it does represent areas that are frequently overlooked. To keep your body in good health and thriving throughout your life, be proactive about your health. Know your body well and you'll be able to recognize when something isn't quite right. With any illness, injury, or disease, an early diagnosis is the best way to come away with effective treatment and a good prognosis.

## RESOURCES

<https://www.healthgrades.com/right-care/mens-health/10-symptoms-men-should-never-ignore>

<https://www.eehealth.org/blog/2021/06/10-symptoms-mens-health>

[www.americanheartassociation.org](http://www.americanheartassociation.org)