K-State experts urge men to talk about their health

Men may tend to ignore symptoms for too long

K-State Research and Extension news service

MANHATTAN, Kan. – Sometimes, society’s norms make it more difficult for men to take care of their health.

Men have grown up with the idea that they need to be tough in all aspects of life and are told to “Cowboy up, walk it off, keep your emotions to yourself…,” said Holly Miner, a family and consumer science agent with K-State Research and Extension’s Wildcat District.

“This is especially true when talking about mental health as well as physical health. Symptoms are ignored or put on the back burner to deal with later,” Miner said. “It is hard to see our loved ones suffering an illness, but even harder when a little preventative health care could have identified the illness sooner before it became a more serious health concern.”

Miner noted that as we age, our bodies tend to lose some stamina and our overall health may change.

“It is hard to see ourselves going through these changes,” she said. “Early detection is key to some health outcomes. Preventative screenings will help identify if there is an underlying issue that could be treated early to prevent more serious health outcomes.”

Miner recommends that all men get regular screenings for colorectal cancer, heart health, prostate cancer, dental and vision check-ups, and annual physical examinations.

“Talk with your healthcare provider to determine where to start based on any symptoms you may have, or better yet start now when you have no symptoms,” she said.

“Be honest with your health care provider. We know there are genetic links for many diseases, which cannot be controlled but we need to be sure they are identified early for the best treatment outcomes. We want our loved ones to be around for as long as possible and taking care of our health as we age can make a difference.”

Taylor Lee, a family and community wellness agent in Atchison County, said that when it comes to health, “it is better to be proactive than reactive.”
“As a male myself, I know that it can become easy to worry more about your loved ones and less about your individual health. Taking care of your mind and body by eating a healthy diet, staying active and getting preventive screenings ensures you are taking steps towards long-term health.”

He adds: “Having pain and discomfort for extended periods is not normal and should be addressed.”

Men are more likely than women to die by suicide, cancer and heart disease; cancer and heart disease are the leading causes of death in men.

“It is imperative that men seek help when dealing with physical and mental health issues instead of letting the problem persist and potentially worsen,” Lee said.

Miner pointed out that caring for one’s health is parallel to showing care for those you love, as well.

“If you don’t take care of your health for yourself, then do it for those you love,” she said.

More information on living well is available at local extension offices in Kansas.

-30-

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K-State Research and Extension local offices, https://www.ksre.ks-state.edu/about/stateandareamaps.html

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