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The Good, The Bad and The Ugly Of Arizona Men's Health

Men's Health Week June 13-19, 2011

Arizona men are making strides towards better health this year, but unfortunately, they still face many challenges. The good news, however, is that more than 85,000 adult men in Arizona quit tobacco last year; and they represent the lowest overall rate of cancer in the country, including prostate cancer.

Even with those astounding achievements, there is bad news. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) ranks Arizona men in the bottom half of their rankings for men's overall health, pointing to the low number of health screenings and the high rate of obesity. Of course, that's not what the men say. Eighty-six percent of Arizona's men say their general health is good, very good or excellent, according to the 2009 Behavioral Risk Factor Survey.

"I'm not surprised by the perception among men about their health," says Wayne Tormala, Men's Health Coordinator for the Arizona Department of Health Services. "Too often, men judge their health by how they feel or how they look. Men typically aren't aware of the warning signs of the 'silent killers' we know as heart disease, cancer, stroke and diabetes."

According to the CDC, 73 percent of men in Arizona are overweight or obese, and compared to the U.S. average, Arizona men are more likely to have high cholesterol. Almost half of Arizona men skip regular exercise and three out of four don't eat enough fruits and vegetables. They also rank worse than the national average in stroke, obesity, high blood pressure, and heavy drinking.

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“The ugly of this equation is many of the risk factors for chronic disease are within their control,” according to Tormala. “During Men’s Health Week (June 13-19), I am challenging men to ‘Man Up’ by making a personal commitment to eat healthier and take control of their health.”

There’s a great misconception, especially among men, that eating healthy means eating more salad and other foods that don’t satisfy their appetite. That’s just not the case according to Tormala, “We have manly but healthy recipes available at www.eatwellbewell.org and men should not be afraid to use them!”

Tormala’s ecstatic about those who quit using tobacco, but knows there are thousands more who can benefit from stopping now. The Arizona Smokers Helpline (ASHLine) is just waiting to help. “When you’re ready to quit, call 1-800-55-66-222 or visit www.ashline.org.”

Tormala also knows hundreds of thousands of men who are skipping the health screenings they should get. Whether it is an annual check-up or a prostate screening or colonoscopy, early detection of a problem directly affects a man’s ability to survive the diagnosis.

“Knowing may be scary, but not knowing can be fatal,” says Tormala. “Put aside your fears and ‘man-up’ – find out what’s going on inside. Knowing your blood pressure, cholesterol level, glucose level, and risk of cancer can literally save your life.”

Note: Wayne Tormala is available for interviews throughout Men’s Health Week.

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Men’s Health Fact Sheet
www.tobaccofreearizona.com/resources

Manly, healthy recipes:
www.eatwellbewell.org

About Men’s Health Week www.menshealthweek.org

The purpose of national Men's Health Week is to heighten the awareness of preventable health problems and encourage early detection and treatment of disease among men and boys. This week gives health care providers, public policy makers, the media, and individuals an opportunity to encourage men and boys to seek regular medical advice and early treatment for disease and injury.

About Arizona’s Smokers’ Helpline www.ASHLine.org

The Arizona Smokers’ Helpline offers effective, research-based tobacco use cessation services to Arizona residents through personalized telephone coaching services in English and Spanish. For more information on ASHLine services call toll-free 1-800-55-66-222 or visit www.ASHLine.org.

About Wayne Tormala

Wayne Tormala is the Bureau Chief for the Bureau of Tobacco and Chronic Disease at the Arizona Department of Health Services. He has also been designated by the Agency as the state health department’s Men’s Health Coordinator.