

PRINT TRANSCRIPT - Health Tips for Men Over 50

It's Not Too Late to Make Changes

For men, their 50s can be a time of reflection and introspection. Many have worked three decades or more, watched children grow into adults and now their thoughts turn to retiring one day. But what about their health? Maybe they've had a few bumps and bruises along the way, or maybe something more serious, but 50 is the time for men to start prioritizing their health, if they haven't done so already.

"We're all constantly changing," said Dr. Zack Fulton, Family Medicine, OSF HealthCare.

"Obviously as we get older more things go wrong and we have more problems. One of the reasons why the 50s is a magic number because there's a lot of new screening tests that start in your 50s for a vast majority of the people, especially men."

Preventive care is crucial to overall health. Dr. Fulton, a family medicine physician with OSF HealthCare, stresses the importance of getting an annual physical. Among the health screenings you can expect:

- Blood pressure screening
- Cancer screening
- Colonoscopy
- Cholesterol screening
- Prostate exams

"I think the biggest thing with any patient is getting to know them and what their concerns are first and getting to know their family history so you know what is most likely to cause a problem for them," said Dr. Zack Fulton, Family Medicine, OSF HealthCare. "You want to gear their medical care to what they need the most."

Other tips for men over 50 to consider:

Sleep – Men over 50 need between seven and nine hours of sleep each night to properly function.

Healthy Eating – Dr. Fulton says make smaller changes, rather than bigger ones, that will stick over a longer period of time. That includes giving up junk food and opting for more fruits and vegetables, which will also help with excess weight around the midsection.

Smoking – it's never too late to quit. According to Dr. Fulton, putting an end to smoking can improve overall health, including breathing and endurance along with decreasing the risk of cancer.

Alcohol - Watch your alcohol consumption. Most men tend to drink too much in one sitting. Moderation is the key.

Exercise – Dr. Fulton recommends a combination of strength training and cardio workouts, especially for men who are sedentary due to work and lifestyle. Men lose bone mass and flexibility by their 60s, so strength training takes on added importance.

“It’s never too late to change a lifestyle,” said Dr. Zack Fulton, Family Medicine, OSF HealthCare. “I think wherever you’re at, you’re at a different starting point than you were. It’s always better to start sooner but you’re never too late to start changing bad habits. Sometimes you have to find what works for you. We can’t all go to the gym like we did and lift weights and pump iron maybe the same way when you were in high school and college. But there are exercises you can do to strengthen your muscles and get some of that back.”

Don’t know where to start? The first step is to visit your doctor who can help devise a plan that will get you pointed in the right direction.

“So often we have trouble just getting people to make that first step and come in they have underlying problems they don’t even know about,” said Dr. Zack Fulton, Family Medicine, OSF HealthCare. “Once we get some of the measurements – check their weight, check their cholesterol, then we can really gear the focus towards what they need the most and what they want the most.”

For more information on men’s health, visit OSF HealthCare [here](#).