

Script – Broadcast – Don't wait until it hurts

INTRO

We all know some men who'd rather fight off sharks than deal with issues that affect their health. They don't like talking about it, they put symptoms on the back burner, and they don't see a health care provider unless it's at the urging of a persistent wife who might schedule the appointment.

June is National Men's Health Month. It's a time to encourage men to take their health seriously, make necessary lifestyle changes and get established with a primary care provider, if they don't have one.

According to Ben Guth, an advanced practice nurse with OSF HealthCare, the reasons for putting off medical care vary. For some men, they're too busy working to find the time to book, for example, an eye exam or dentist appointment. Some are willing to wait out a nagging pain or a lingering headache. And for others it's simply a case of "if it ain't broke, don't fix it."

((SOS))

Ben Guth (GOOTH), nurse practitioner, OSF HealthCare

"Men will often tell me, 'I don't have any problems. Everything feels fine. I don't need to see you.' Unfortunately, all issues won't really present as a symptom until they're in the more moderate to severe stages." (:15)

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Guth strongly recommends all adult men, even those in their late teens, 20s and 30s, to have an annual physical. Men should have annual screenings for diabetes, hypertension and cholesterol, as well as certain cancers. Prostate cancer screening is done with a simple blood test.

"The recommendation for any healthy man is to start at age 50," Guth says about prostate cancer screening. "Typically, we will screen sooner if there are certain risk factors, or you're in a population that has a higher chance of developing prostate cancer. In my practice, I usually start the conversation with men in between 40 and 45 for prostate cancer."

Colon cancer screening begins at age 45 and is repeated every five or 10 years, depending on findings and family history. Also, regular self-exams are important when it comes to issues such as testicular cancer, which is more than 90% curable if caught early enough.

TAG

Another issue affecting men that isn't always talked about is stress. Whether it is job or family related, or it stems from health or financial issues, everyone has reason to worry from time to time. Guth recommends several options for dealing with stress, which, if not handled properly, can cause major health problems such as heart disease, depression and sleep disorders.

Guth suggests first finding ways to relieve stress in a healthy way such as exercising, reading and spending time with loved ones. Men can also consider talking to a therapist or counselor if daily stress becomes too much to handle.