

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Department of Health Encouraging Men To Get Preventive Health Screenings As Part of Men's Health Month

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With June being the month that all attention is on men's preventive healthcare, the Department of Health said it wants all male residents to take greater responsibility for their own health by making June the month where they focus on their health and get scheduled for routine screenings.

Even if you are not in a high-risk group or have a family history of a particular disease, you still need to get regular checkups and age appropriate preventive health screenings. Many health challenges for men and boys are preventable or can be controlled with early

detection and intervention. That's why health screenings are your best line of defense, the department said.

If you are age 50 or older, the following screenings are recommended on an annual basis: physical exams, blood pressure and urinalysis, a Chest X-Ray, an Electrocardiogram (EKG) which will test your heart's efficiency, a rectal exam, which screens for hemorrhoids and lower rectal problems, and an annual colonoscopy that will examine the rectum and upper and lower colon for cancer. Having an annual conversation with your doctor about mental health wellness is also recommended.

Annual laboratory tests should include: Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) test for prostate health, hemoccult (screens for microscopic amounts of blood in stool that could be the first sign of colon cancer), Bone mineral density tests to examine bone health, testosterone screenings (blood test), and a test for sexually transmitted diseases also known as STD's. A Tuberculosis skin tests is recommended every 5 years (if not previously exposed), Tetanus Booster (needed every ten (10) years).

The department said men should not forget to perform regular self-tests on: 1. testicles to find lumps in their earliest stage, 2. skin to find moles or early signs of skin cancer, 3. Mouth – to find signs of lesions and 4. Breasts - to find any signs of unusual lumps.

While the examinations listed above should be completed each year for men over age 50, it is recommended that men age 20 and older take the following tests: physical exams, blood tests and urinalysis, and an EKG (beginning at age 30) every 2-3 years if they have not already experienced a medical problem that may signal more frequent testing is necessary. Mental health wellness discussions with your doctor are recommended on an annual basis regardless of age.

To schedule your annual preventive screening visit, contact:

St. Croix:

- Department of Health Community Health Clinics at 340-718-1311, extension 3676
- Family Planning Clinic at 340-514-9766

St. Thomas

- Department of Health Community Health Clinics at 340-774-7477
- Family Planning Clinic at 340-774-5256

St. John