

As you get older, the risk of developing serious health problems increases. With this in mind, bad habits such as poor diet, smoking, drugs or excessive drinking all become an even greater risk to you with time and should be sorted out earlier rather than later.

The major health issues faced by men aged 25–50 include:

01

### Depression

More women report being depressed yet more men kill themselves. Untreated depression is a leading risk factor for suicide. Suicide is the major killer of young men. Depression is a very common illness that can affect anyone, male or female, of any age and at almost any time. It's more than feeling blue or down in the dumps for a few days. Depression is a longer-lasting condition that can, in many cases, completely dominate daily life.

02

### Smoking

If you are a smoker, best to quit as soon as possible. Why quit? One in two smokers will be killed by their habit. This is because smoking causes:

- A one-third of all cancer deaths
- B 85% lung cancer deaths
- C four out of five deaths from bronchitis and emphysema
- D one in four deaths from heart disease

03

### Weight problems

Health problems associated with weight can develop if you put on excess amounts of body fat and become overweight or obese. Excess fat around the abdomen can be a particular health risk and is very common in middle aged men. To find out if you're at risk, take your waist measurement at the belly button and compare it with these values:

- A 94 cm to 101 cm – overweight
- B 102 cm or more – obese

The following physical, psychological and social problems are linked to obesity:

- A Breathlessness, snoring, sleep disturbances
- B Knee, ankle and back pain, osteoarthritis
- C Excess sweating, athlete's foot
- D Sexual difficulties
- E Raised blood glucose levels and Type 2 diabetes
- F Raised blood pressure and stroke
- G Raised cholesterol and triglyceride levels (another fat in the blood) and heart disease
- H Gallstones
- I Colon and prostate cancers
- J Low self-esteem and depression

04

### Sexual problems

Sexual problems such as the persistent or recurrent inability to achieve or maintain an erection long enough to complete your chosen sexual activity satisfactorily. The occasional inability to achieve a satisfactory erection doesn't normally constitute a problem.

Most men will experience an erection problem at least once. This could be due to stress, exhaustion, too much alcohol or simply not feeling like sex. Persistent erectile dysfunction (ED) is estimated to affect about 10% of men at any one time.

Although age itself isn't a cause of erectile dysfunction (ED), the risk nevertheless increases as you get older: 18% of 50–59 year olds have trouble with their erections compared with 7% of 18–29 year olds.

06

### Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

STIs are very common and can affect you whether you're straight, gay or bisexual. And you don't need to have sex with lots of people to be at risk of catching an STI – just one brief encounter with a person who has an STI may be enough.

Infections can be transmitted in several ways:

- A through vaginal sex
- B through oral sex
- C through anal sex
- D through skin-to-skin contact

Some of the more common symptoms of an STI may include:

- A a yellow discharge from your penis
- B inflammation of your testicles
- C irritation of your penis
- D pain when urinating

If you have any of these problems, or any other suspicious symptoms, your best bet is to get them checked by a doctor.

The best ways to avoid an STI is:

- A To be celibate (not considered a desirable option by most people).
- B To practice safer sex (this means always using a condom for penetrative sex).
- C To get regular check-ups by your Doctor. This is important because not all STIs produce symptoms.

It's important to remember that most STIs can be easily treated.