

**“Stall the Ball - Men’s Health for All”**  
*Launch of Men’s Health Week 2012 in Ireland*

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**Men in Ireland are often accused of being forgetful; especially when it comes to remembering significant dates such as birthdays and anniversaries. However, while this might sometimes be true, there’s a date that all men need to know about - as it could help to save their life! This date is Monday 11<sup>th</sup> - Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2012, also known as International Men’s Health Week.**

European Football Championship fever is in the air. Men across the country are planning their viewing schedules (possibly even their working hours), stockpiling enough refreshments to see them through a nuclear winter, and making arrangements with their friends for the common sharing of this four-yearly experience.

Many men are knowledgeable about what lies ahead. They know which teams have got through to this stage; who is in each group; what days and times countries will be playing; what the bookies’ odds are for each team to win; which players are likely to be the stars of the competition ...

Euro 2012 has created a common bond among many men. They have a reason to be in each other’s company. They are well informed by the media about what lies ahead. They are prepared to give their opinions and stand out from the crowd. They are motivated and excited. They are enthusiastic and want to be involved. They are likely to show more emotion than usual.

Michael Lynch, Chairperson of the Men’s Health Forum in Ireland (which coordinates Men’s Health Week on the island of Ireland), comments:

*“These are traits that we don’t often associate with Irish males. However, we need to ‘stall the ball’ for a minute. Despite all this focus on men, few people (male or female) are aware of what men’s health needs are, when Men’s Health Week is on, indeed, why we even need such a week in the first place”.*

So, why should we focus upon men's health? Well, put simply, men, on the island of Ireland, experience a disproportionate burden of ill-health and die too young:

- Local men die, on average, almost five years younger than women do.
- Males have higher death rates than women for all of the leading causes of death and at all ages.
- Poor lifestyles are responsible for a high proportion of chronic diseases.
- Late presentation to health services leads to a large number of problems becoming untreatable ...

The high level of premature mortality amongst men in Ireland has far-reaching repercussions. It affects not only industry and commerce, but also impacts upon the social and financial positions of families - through the loss of what is still, in many households, the primary income earner. However, this is not a 'lost cause' - research shows that preventable risk factors account for a high proportion of male illnesses. Therefore, we can all take positive and practical action to do something about this situation.

Men's Health Week provides an annual opportunity for everyone to do their bit to improve the health of local men. Each year, there is a focus upon a specific theme. The theme for 2012 in Ireland is: "*Men's Health - What's Your First Instinct ... Fight? Flight? Find Out?*"

Human beings start out life with a pre-disposition for self-preservation. This 'first instinct' drives them to eat well, keep fit, be active, ensure personal safety, look after themselves, work collectively and tend to injuries. However, over time - especially in Western societies - it is easy to become complacent, individualistic, isolated, lonely ... and, consequently, for health (physical, mental, emotional and spiritual) to suffer.

As Michael Lynch adds:

*"This year, the focus of Men's Health Week is upon developing a 'First Instinct' in males which is to actively seek help, advice, support, and to act quickly in times of difficulty, crisis or ill health. We are encouraging men to choose the 'find out' option rather than to ignore symptoms, turn to alcohol, 'soldier on' or take their own life when faced with problems".*

**ENDS - followed by Editor's Notes**

## **Editor's Notes:**

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- Men's Health Week ([www.mhfi.org/international-mens-health-week.html](http://www.mhfi.org/international-mens-health-week.html)) always begins on the Monday before Father's Day and ends on Father's Day itself. This year, it will run from Monday 11<sup>th</sup> until Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2012. It is celebrated in most European countries, as well as in the USA, Australia, New Zealand and a number of other places worldwide.
- The core aims each year are to: heighten awareness of preventable health problems for males of all ages; support men and boys to engage in healthier lifestyle choices / activities; encourage the early detection and treatment of health difficulties in males.
- Each year, individual countries focus upon a specific theme. The theme for 2012 in Ireland is: "Men's Health - What's Your First Instinct ... Fight? Flight? Find Out?"
- The Men's Health Forum in Ireland ([www.mhfi.org](http://www.mhfi.org)) is a charity which works on an all-Ireland basis to enhance the health of men and boys. It is a voluntary network of individuals and organisations, men and women, which seeks to identify the key concerns relating to male health and to increase understanding of these issues. Every year, the Forum coordinates Men's Health Week activity on the island of Ireland.
- Men's Health Week 2012 in Ireland has been planned by a broad range of partners who contributed to an inter-agency, all-island Planning Group.
- Links to some of the most important pieces of information are available online ...
  - Full overview of Men's Health Week 2012: [www.mhfi.org/mens-health-week-2012.html](http://www.mhfi.org/mens-health-week-2012.html)
  - Briefing paper which answers all the most common questions: [www.mhfi.org/mhw2012briefing.pdf](http://www.mhfi.org/mhw2012briefing.pdf)
  - Men's Health Week posters and images: [www.mhfi.org/mens-health-week-image-pack.html](http://www.mhfi.org/mens-health-week-image-pack.html)
  - Practical suggestions on how organisations can get involved: [www.mhfi.org/mens-health-week-2012.html#Mark](http://www.mhfi.org/mens-health-week-2012.html#Mark)
  - Events list: [www.mhfi.org/mhw2012events.pdf](http://www.mhfi.org/mhw2012events.pdf)
  - Latest developments: [www.facebook.com/MensHealthForumIreland](https://www.facebook.com/MensHealthForumIreland) and [www.twitter.com/MensHealthIRL](https://www.twitter.com/MensHealthIRL)