

Men's Health Week 2014



The Tool Box for Action



MEN'S HEALTH WEEK

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Men's Health Week 2014

Why do we need to focus upon men's health issues and needs?

Men, on the island of Ireland, experience a disproportionate burden of ill-health and die too young ...

- Local men die, on average, four and a half years younger than women do.
- Males have higher death rates than women for all of the leading causes of death.
- 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 ...



Indeed, while many of these conditions are preventable, their prevalence among men may, in fact, rise in the future.

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When is Men's Health Week (MHW)?

Men's Health Week (MHW) always begins on the Monday before Father's Day and ends on Father's Day itself. This year, it will run from Monday 9th until Sunday 15th June 2014.

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Where is MHW celebrated?

MHW is celebrated in most European countries, as well as in the USA, Australia, New Zealand and a number of other places worldwide.

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What are the aims of MHW?

Internationally, the core aims of MHW 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.

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Is there a specific theme this year?

Each year, individual countries focus upon a specific theme. The theme for 2014 in Ireland is: *'Challenges, Choices and Celebrations - What's Your Aim?'*

This is different to the theme in England and Wales - which will focus upon work and health.

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Why 'Challenges, Choices and Celebrations'?

Not too long ago, we were unaware of the full extent of men's poor health status and the specific health issues that they face. However, this is no longer the case. Therefore, we cannot ignore the needs of almost half of the population of the island of Ireland.

In recent years, a broad range of research has highlighted the health difficulties which face men in Ireland and further afield. For example ...

- Men's Health in Ireland (www.mhfi.org/fullreport.pdf)
- Getting Inside Men's Health (www.mhfi.org/gettinginsidemenshealth.pdf)
- Men's Health in Northern Ireland: Tackling the Root Causes of Men's [ill] Health (www.mhfi.org/manmattersbriefing1.pdf)
- A Report on the all-Ireland Young Men and Suicide Project (www.mhfi.org/ymspfullreport.pdf)
- Facing the Challenge - The Impact of Recession and Unemployment on Men's Health in Ireland (www.mhfi.org/IPHreport2011.pdf)
- A Report on the Excess Burden of Cancer among Men in the Republic of Ireland (www.mhfi.org/ICSreport2013.pdf)
- The State of Men's Health in Europe (www.mhfi.org/menshealtheurope.pdf) ...

This evidence clearly shows that there are many **CHALLENGES** to be faced when seeking to improve men's health. However, it also highlights that men's health can be improved in many significant ways - if we make the right **CHOICES**. Men, themselves, have a key role to play in this process, but they require support, encouragement and opportunities to succeed.

The Republic of Ireland was the first country in the world to have a National Men's Health Policy (www.mhfi.org/menshealthpolicy.pdf). This was founded upon a comprehensive review of men's health evidence (both nationally and internationally), as well as consultations with a range of stakeholders - including men themselves. Northern Ireland still lacks any dedicated formal framework / guidelines for assessing or meeting men's health needs.



Now that we know what many of the key men's health issues are, it's time to do something about them. Men's health is not just an issue for individual men. While it is crucial for men to take responsibility for looking after themselves, their health can often be determined by other factors outside of their personal control. Thus, there is also a need for policy-makers and service providers to recognise the role that they need to play, and to do something practical about it. Subsequently, Men's Health Week this year asks everyone: **'WHAT'S YOUR AIM?'**

Frequently, we simply blame men for their own state of health, and focus upon the shortcomings of individuals. MHW 2014 calls upon everyone to do their bit to improve the lot of men and boys, as well as to **CELEBRATE** the important contributions that males make to our society.

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What were the themes for MHW in previous years?

Previous MHWs in Ireland have focused upon ...

- 2005 - Obesity
- 2006 - Mental Well-Being
- 2007 - Long-Term Conditions
- 2008 - Health in the Workplace
- 2009 - Access to Services
- 2010 - Physical Activity
- 2011 - Supporting Men and Boys during Challenging Times
- 2012 - What's Your First Instinct ... Fight? Flight? Find Out?
- 2013 - Action Men! - Turning Words into Actions



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Who is the target audience?

The purpose of MHW is to draw attention to the health and well-being issues affecting men and boys, and to encourage / promote personal, structural and systemic change where possible. This, therefore, implies that any messages and engagement needs to target:

- Males themselves
- Policy / decision-makers
- Service providers
- Public awareness and preconceptions

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Who can be involved in this week?

MHW gives everyone (health professionals, service providers, youth groups, sporting bodies, community organisations, employers, Churches, policy makers, family workers, the media, parents, individuals ...) an opportunity to encourage men and boys to take better care of their health and to seek help or treatment at an early stage.

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How can my organisation get involved?

Absolutely everyone can do something to support and celebrate MHW 2014. The focus for this year (i.e. *“Challenges, Choices and Celebrations - What’s Your Aim?”*) lends itself to a wide range of ways to mark this occasion. However, anything which promotes the week and encourages men and boys to lead healthier lifestyles, to be more aware of preventable health problems, and to seek early detection and treatment for health difficulties is very welcome.

A range of practical ideas for how you or your organisation can be involved in MHW 2014 can be found online at: www.mhfi.org/mhw2014celebrateit.pdf These suggestions range from the simple and free, to large-scale and expensive!

You could also consider helping to give out the new, free, 32 page ‘Challenges and Choices’ mini-manual for men (see www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2014.html for details).

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Are there any ways that I can promote the week?

There is a common logo / image pack which can be used by everyone who wishes to raise awareness of the week. There is also a MHW 2014 poster. These are important promotional tools - as one of the key aims is to let as many people as possible know about the week. These are available, free, to anyone who wishes to use them. See www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-image-pack.html for more details.

Promotion of MHW could take the form of:

- Putting-up a poster.
- Advertising MHW on your own website.
- Creating a link from your website to the MHW 2014 web page (www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2014.html).
- Sending an email to everyone in your contacts list about Men's Health Week and asking them to forward the message.
- Inserting the MHW logo (www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-image-pack.html) into your outgoing emails.
- Becoming a fan of the Men's Health Week in Ireland's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/MensHealthWeek) and sending the link to all your online friends.
- Including information about MHW in your mailouts / newsletters.
- Telling others about what is happening in your area during MHW by posting details on the MHW website (www.mhfi.org/mhw/promote-an-event.html).
- Reminding your colleagues to follow all the latest MHW news on Twitter (www.twitter.com/MensHealthIRL).
- Tweeting about MHW 2014, and including #WhatsYourAim in your message.
- Encouraging the men you know to get involved in some of the activities taking place around the country ...

Doing one or more of these simple (and cost-free) things would contribute hugely to MHW 2014!

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Who has planned Men's Health Week 2014 in Ireland?

MHW in Ireland has been planned by a broad range of partners who contributed to an inter-agency Planning Group. This body met, and had ongoing communication with each other, between January and April 2014. It was convened and coordinated by the [Men's Health Forum in Ireland](#) (MHFI). MHFI works alongside other Men's Health Fora worldwide to focus attention upon male health issues.

The theme for this year's MHW (i.e. 'Challenges, Choices and Celebrations') offers an opportunity for a very wide range of agencies to participate. Indeed, the planning process for 2014 drew upon the insight, expertise, support and contacts of individuals from ...

Action Cancer
Alcohol Action Ireland
Amen

ARK (Queen's University and University of Ulster)
Belfast Community Sports Development Network
Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Marian House Nursing Home, Kimmage Manor
Marie Keating Foundation
Men Alone in No-mans-land
Menaware
Men's Action Network
Men's Development Network

British Medical Association NI
Colin Neighbourhood Partnership
Cork University Hospital
Dublin City University School of Nursing
Fír Le Cheile (Men Together)
Gaelic Athletic Association
Health Service Executive, Dublin / North East
Helplink Support Services
Inspire Ireland
Irish Cancer Society
Irish Football Association
Irish Heart Foundation
Irish Men's Sheds Association
Irish Rugby Football Union
Irish Sports Council
Lewis Fertility Testing
Man Alive - Cancer Focus NI
Man Matters Project

Men's Health Forum in Ireland
Mental Health Ireland
National Youth Council of Ireland
Northern Health and Social Care Trust
Northern Ireland Chest, Heart and Stroke
Northern Ireland Medical Students' Committee
Safefood
See Change
Southern Health and Social Care Trust
Sport Northern Ireland
Sure Start Fathers' Network
The Rainbow Project
Union of Students in Ireland
Waterford Institute of Technology
Western Health and Social Care Trust
Workers' Educational Association
YouthAction Northern Ireland
3fivetwo Training Academy

... as well as a range of other interested individuals from across the island of Ireland.

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What is the Men's Health Forum in Ireland?

The Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) is a diverse network of individuals and organisations, men and women, from both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The Forum was established in 1999, and operates on an all-island basis. At present, it has one temporary self-employed worker, but is, primarily, structured, organised and run using the expertise, resources and enthusiasm of volunteers.

MHFI is a charitable organisation which is registered as a Company Limited by Guarantee. The Forum seeks to promote all aspects of the health and well being of men and boys on the island of Ireland through research, training, networking, health initiatives and advocacy. It is managed by a Board of Trustees.

One of MHFI's core areas of work is the coordination of Men's Health Week (MHW) activity on the island of Ireland each year. More details can be found at: www.mhfi.org

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How can I find out more about MHW?

To find out more about Men's Health Week 2014, contact ...

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or visit ...

Website: www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2014.html
Facebook: www.facebook.com/MensHealthWeek
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/MensHealthIRL>

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