

Men's Health Week 2026



The Toolbox for Action



MEN'S HEALTH WEEK

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Men's Health Week (MHW) 2026

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

Males constitute almost 50% of the population on the island of Ireland and, therefore, deserve to have a gender lens focused upon their specific health needs. Research shows that these men experience a disproportionate burden of ill-health and die too young ...

- Local men die younger than women do.
- Males have higher death rates than females for almost 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 can lead to a large number of problems becoming untreatable ...



Indeed, while many of these conditions are preventable, their prevalence amongst men may, in fact, rise in the future. However, this is not a lost cause. Much can be / is being done to improve this situation.

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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 15th until Sunday 21st June 2026.

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Where is MHW celebrated?

MHW is celebrated in many European countries, as well as in the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Canada 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 2026 on the whole island of Ireland is: **'One Step at a Time'**, and everyone is being asked to ***make progress not seek perfection***.

This theme is different to the one in Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales).



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Why choose the theme ‘One Step at a Time’ for 2026?

Not too long ago, we were unaware of the full extent of men’s poor health status and the specific health issues that they are contending with. However, this is no longer the case. In recent years, a broad range of research has highlighted the health challenges which face men in Ireland and further afield. Some key local statistics / evidence can be found at: <https://mhfi.org/resources/key-facts.html>

Yet, although the health of men in Ireland is poor, it is not a ‘lost cause’ - and it can be improved in many significant ways. A wide range of innovative and positive work has already taken place to support the health needs of men and boys: Ireland was the first country in the world to have a [National Men’s Health Policy](#); this was succeeded by two dedicated [Healthy Ireland Men \(HI-M\) Action Plans](#); the ‘Engage’ and ‘MANifest’ men’s health training programmes have influenced how services and structures support males; pioneering approaches have been developed and tested which provide models for improving men’s health (e.g. [CAIRDE](#)); new men’s health and support groups are evolving across the island of Ireland ... Much has been achieved, but there is still room for improvement.

It goes without saying that men, themselves, need to play a central role in taking control of their health and wellbeing. But 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, service providers, and society as a whole to recognise the role that they need to play, and to do something practical about it. This will require everyone to focus attention upon the men and boys around us.

Many men say that they get the feeling that everyone is trying to weigh them down with ‘health messages’, and that they are always made to feel guilty about the things that they don’t do (or that they do wrong). This image of ‘Men Behaving Badly’ is hardly a positive place to begin an honest conversation about health improvement with anyone!

Of course, it is true that we all need to: eat 5-7 portions of fruit / vegetables a day; have at least 30 minutes moderate physical activity on five days a week; stop smoking; limit our alcohol consumption; check our bits and bobs; maintain our social connections; seek help quickly when we need it ... but, if we aren’t already doing this, then we need to find practical and realistic ways to get ourselves into this routine.

During Men's Health Week 2026, everyone is being asked to simply take **ONE STEP AT A TIME** and to work towards making progress rather than seeking perfection - to take small steps that can have big results.

Take one step at a time. Make progress, don’t seek perfection. Have a great week!

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What were the themes for MHW in previous years?

Previous MHWs in Ireland have focused upon ...

- 2005 - Obesity
- 2006 - Mental Wellbeing
- 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
- 2014 - Challenges and Choices: What's Your Aim?
- 2015 - Creating Culture Change
- 2016 - Men United for Health and Wellbeing: Are We Winning?
- 2017 - It's all about HI-M: How are you doing?
- 2018 - One Small Step for Man
- 2019 - Men's Health Matters: Make the Time. Take the Time.
- 2020 - Restoring the Balance
- 2021 - Making the Connections: Check In. Check Up. Check It Out.
- 2022 - MISSION: isPOSSIBLE - the action starts with you
- 2023 - What's your Picture of Health?
- 2024 - Know Your Numbers - Men's Health Counts
- 2025 - Shoulder-to-Shoulder

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Who is the target audience?

The purpose of MHW is to draw attention to the health and wellbeing 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, pharmacists, 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 2026. The theme this year (i.e. *'One Step at a Time'*) lends itself to a wide range of ways to get involved. However, anything which promotes and celebrates 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 2026 can be found online at: www.mhfi.org/mhw2026celebrateit.pdf These suggestions range from the simple and free, to large-scale and expensive.

You could also consider helping to distribute the free *'Action Man - ten top tips for men's health'* booklet (www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2026.html#ActionMan) and *'Do You Know Your Numbers'* Z-card (www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2026.html#ZCard).

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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 MHW. There is also a MHW 2026 poster and postcard. 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 freely available for anyone who wishes to use them, and can be adapted for local use. See www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-image-pack.html for more details.

Promotion of MHW could take the form of:

- a) Putting a Men's Health Week [poster](#) (or two or three) up in your workplace / local shop / waiting room / home ... and/or sending the MHW [postcard](#) to people you know.
- b) Promoting the week on your website - using a copy of the Men's Health Week [logo](#) or [badge](#) or [banner](#).
- c) Linking to the Men's Health Forum in Ireland's web page devoted to Men's Health Week 2026 (www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2026.html) from your own website, Facebook page or other social networking site.
- d) Sending an email to everyone on your mailing list to tell them about Men's Health Week, and asking them to forward the message to all their contacts. Why not also insert the MHW [logo](#), [badge](#) or [banner](#) into your outgoing emails for the months of May and June?
- e) Becoming a fan of the Men's Health Week in Ireland's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/MensHealthWeek) and sending this link to all your online friends.
- f) Including information on [Men's Health Week 2026](#) in your mailouts / newsletters.
- g) Telling others about what is happening in your area during Men's Health Week by registering the details on the MHFI website. Use the form at: www.mhfi.org/mhw/promote-an-event.html
- h) Making one of the Men's Health Week 2026 [graphics](#) your computer desktop 'wallpaper' during May and June.
- i) Reminding your colleagues to follow all the latest news on Twitter / X (www.twitter.com/MensHealthIRL).
- j) Posting / Tweeting about the week using the [pool of ready-made resources](#) and including **#MensHealthWeek** and **#ProgressNotPerfection** in your message.
- k) Using the MHW [Facebook Cover Photo](#) or [Twitter-X Header Image](#) on your social media pages and feeds ...

Doing one or more of these simple (and free) things will contribute hugely to MHW 2026!

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Men's Health Week 2026
Find out more at www.mhfi.org

**ONE STEP
AT A TIME**



What is the 'Action Man' Booklet?

Research 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 the right choices are made. Men, themselves, have a key role to play in this process.

While some aspects of our health are determined by things which are beyond our control (such as genetics, our income, the environment that we live in and our access to services), there are also simple, practical and realistic things which we can all do to improve our health and live a longer life. None of these are rocket science, and many are just plain old straightforward common sense.



During previous Men's Health Weeks, the Men's Health Forum in Ireland produced a '[Challenges and Choices' Man Manual](#), which was distributed free-of-charge to males throughout the whole island of Ireland. This publication has now been replaced by the '**Action Man - ten top tips to improve men's health**' booklet.

This booklet doesn't preach or lecture - it simply explains: (i) **WHY** an action is needed; (ii) **WHAT** can be done about it; and (iii) **HOW** to find support if you need it. Thus, the ten top tips put you into the driving seat, and give you the tools and DIY instructions to make positive changes - if you choose to be your own 'Action Man'.

During MHW 2026, this booklet will be made available in both hard copy and in electronic format. These have been funded by the Health Service Executive Health and Wellbeing, Healthy Ireland within the Department of Health, and the Public Health Agency. Find out how to get them at: <https://mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2026.html#ActionMan>

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Who has planned Men's Health Week 2026 in Ireland?

MHW in Ireland has been planned by a broad range of partners who contributed to an inter-agency [Planning Group](#). This body began meeting in December 2025, and has had ongoing communication ever since.

The planning process drew upon the insight, expertise, support and contacts of diverse organisations (voluntary, community, statutory, business, sporting and academic sectors, as well as men's groups) from across the whole of Ireland. The group 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.

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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 two paid workers plus a Post-Doctoral Researcher, 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 wellbeing of men and boys on the island of Ireland through research, training, networking, practical health initiatives and awareness raising.

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 2026, contact ...

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or visit ...

Website: www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2026.html
Facebook: www.facebook.com/MensHealthWeek
Twitter / X: www.twitter.com/MensHealthIRL
YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@MHFI/playlists>

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A promotional banner for Men's Health Week 2026. The banner has a green and orange color scheme. On the left, the text "Men's Health Week" is written in white on orange rectangular backgrounds. Below this, it says "Monday 15th - Sunday 21st June 2026". In the center, there is a circular image showing a young boy in a yellow shirt holding the hand of a man in a grey sweater, who is also holding the hand of an older man in a blue sweater using a walking stick. Below the image, the slogan "ONE STEP AT A TIME - progress, not perfection" is written in white on an orange background. At the bottom, it says "Find out more at www.mhfi.org". The banner also features several logos at the bottom: the Men's Health Week logo, the HSE logo, the Men's Health Forum in Ireland logo, the hi Healthy Ireland logo, and the HSC Public Health Agency logo with the text "Project supported by the PHA". A QR code is located in the bottom right corner.