



# National Men's Health Week 2010

**Up and Running:** Improving the health of men and boys through physical activity and sport



## Proposal for partnership

National Men's Health Week 2010 (14-20th June) will focus on the issue of physical activity and sport. The aim is to get men and boys more active and also to make greater use of sports venues for the delivery of health services and campaigns. This brochure sets out the background to the Week and outlines the Men's Health Forum's plans.

## The Men's Health Forum

National Men's Health Week (NMHW) is organised by the Men's Health Forum (MHF), a charity that aims to provide an independent and authoritative voice for male health in England and Wales and to tackle the issues and inequalities affecting the health and well-being of men and boys.

### We do this through:

- Policy development and research
- Information services to men and health professionals
- Stimulating professional and public debate
- Working with MPs and Government
- Developing innovative and imaginative projects
- Collaborating with the widest possible range of interested organisations and individuals.

In 2009, MHF was appointed a Strategic Partner by the Department of Health giving it a new and influential role in promoting men's health to the government, the NHS, the third sector and beyond.

## National Men's Health Week

NMHW was first held in June 2002 and since then it has grown in size and impact, firmly establishing itself as a key part of the public health calendar. Each year NMHW focuses on a different area of policy relevant to men's health.

### Previous weeks have looked at:

- Male health in general (2002)
- Men and sexual health (2003)
- Men and cancer (2004)
- Men and obesity (2005)
- Men and mental wellbeing (2006)
- Men and long-term conditions (2007)
- Men and work (2008)
- Men's use of health services (2009).

**NMHW provides a focal point for individuals and organisations with an interest in improving men's health.**

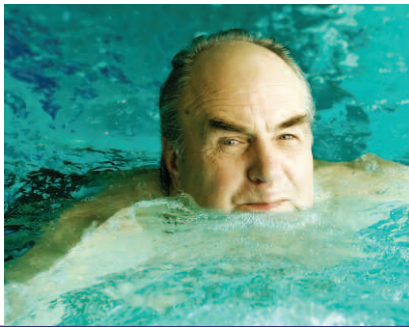


# Men and physical activity

## Most men are not physically active enough to make a difference to their health.

- Just 40% of men meet the Chief Medical Officer's recommendations for physical activity (30 minutes of at least moderate intensity activity on five or more days of the week).
- Over a quarter of boys do not meet the recommended physical activity level (at least one hour of moderate or more intense activity a day).
- Activity levels fall sharply with age. Only 21% of men aged 65-74 and 9% of men aged 75 or over meet the recommendations.
- Sport England research shows that 20% of men participate in sport (defined as at least 30 minutes of sport at moderate intensity at least three times a week, excluding recreational walking and infrequent recreational cycling).
- Most men (72%) do not know the recommended level of physical activity.
- Men in lower income groups are much less likely to be physically active: men in the lowest 20% in terms of household income are almost twice as likely to be inactive as men in the highest quintile.
- Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Chinese men are less likely than the general population to meet physical activity recommendations. Bangladeshi men have particularly low levels of physical activity with just 26% meeting the recommendations.
- Over one third of deaths from coronary heart disease (CHD) are probably due to physical inactivity, according to the British Heart Foundation. This compares to one fifth of CHD deaths due to smoking.
- Physically active men are less likely to be overweight or obese and to develop diabetes, bowel cancer or dementia. They will also feel better about themselves and reduce their risk of depression.

About 120,000 men die prematurely (under the age of 75) each year in the UK. Achieving the recommended levels of moderate intensity physical activity could reduce premature mortality by 20-30%. Such a reduction would therefore enable up to 36,000 more men to live a longer and healthier life.





## National Men's Health Week 2010

The government wants to increase significantly the numbers of men and women who are physically active. Its target is to get two million more people active by 2012. Sport England wants to get one million adults taking part in more sport by 2012/13.

Major forthcoming sporting events create an enormous opportunity to engage more men in physical activity. Significant events in the UK include the Ryder Cup (2010), the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games, the Commonwealth Games (2014) and the cricket World Cup (2019).

The 2010 FIFA World Cup takes place in South Africa but will generate enormous interest among men in the UK. The Group matches take place between 11-25th June, overlapping with NMHW.

NMHW 2010 will make a major contribution to the campaign to get the nation more active and more healthy. The Week has three main objectives:

- **To encourage more men to become more physically active (eg. walking, using the stairs, gardening, DIY)**
- **To improve male participation in sport**
- **To develop the potential of sports settings (eg. stadia, leisure centres) for delivering health services and campaigns to men.**

NMHW will not be a negative event focusing just on the problems that exist but will instead seek to promote a positive view of how the problems can be tackled by highlighting – and encouraging – better self-care by men and good practice within the health system and the world of sport.

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## Key men's health statistics

- A baby boy born in 2005-7 can expect to live 77.2 years and a baby girl 81.5 years, a difference of 4.3 years.
- 40% of men still die prematurely (before the age of 75). Unskilled manual men have a life expectancy of 73 and, in some parts of England, male life expectancy is as low as 65.
- Male death rates are significantly affected by social deprivation and the recession will have a major impact on men's mental and physical health.
- Coronary heart disease kills more men than women and on average men develop it 10-15 years earlier. South Asian men living in the UK have an even higher premature death rate from heart disease and stroke than men generally.
- Men are almost twice as likely to develop and die from one of the ten commonest cancers that affect both men and women (excluding breast cancer).
- Men are more likely to drink alcohol above recommended levels, smoke cigarettes and eat a poor diet.
- Almost one third of boys are now overweight or obese. By 2015, 36% of men will be obese and, by 2025, only 13% will have a healthy body mass index.
- Three times as many men kill themselves. The suicide rate for men is much higher in deprived areas. Young gay men are more likely than heterosexual young men to attempt suicide.
- Men visit their GP 20% less frequently than women and are also much less likely to have regular dental check-ups or to use community pharmacies as a source of advice and information about health.
- NHS smoking cessation programmes are less well used by men than women as are weight management services and health trainers.
- Black and ethnic minority men are less likely to seek help for mental health problems because of stigma and because services have failed to understand their needs.

## Harnessing the power of sport

Men attend sports events in very large numbers. About 13.5 million people, overwhelmingly male, attend Premier League games in England each season. 1.5 million people attend Premier Rugby and a 1.7 million attend Super Rugby matches. In 2008, county cricket attracted an all-time high total attendance of 1.5 million spectators.

These male audiences create a major opportunity to deliver health services and health promotion campaigns. LeedsMet University and the Leeds Men's Health Network have demonstrated how this can be done at rugby matches at the Headingley Carnegie Stadium. Male fans have been offered fresh fruit, general health information and 'MOT' health checks covering cholesterol, blood pressure and weight.

Through Premier League Health, 16 clubs are working with local health agencies including Primary Care Trusts to develop projects that will use the football 'brand' to engage over 4,000 men. The initiative aims to tackle issues as diverse as depression, obesity and general poor physical health, as well as alcohol and substance abuse. Men will be encouraged to play more sport, with some being trained to become football coaches themselves. The projects will also point the men who take part in the direction of other agencies that might be able to help improve their health.



## NMHW 2010 activities

During NMHW 2010, the MHF will:

- Raise men's awareness of the importance of physical activity and sport to better health.
- Host a high-profile national launch event, 'A Question of Health'. Workplace teams will compete against a sports celebrity team in a competition along the lines of the popular TV sports programme. This will cover a range of men's health issues in an innovative and entertaining way.
- Publish resources that can be used on a long-term basis. These will be for the use of individual men and for professionals. MHF plans to produce generic materials – including a MHF/Haynes 'mini manual' on men and physical activity as well as web-based information – that can be used in a variety of settings. Bespoke materials can be produced for individual organisations.
- Support local events, organised by individual primary care or other health organisations, workplaces, sports organisations, community groups, etc., eg. 'MOT' checks for men or health improvement campaigns on lifestyle issues.
- Work with the All Party Parliamentary Group on Men's Health to hold a meeting to discuss men, physical activity and sport.
- Publish new policy on the NMHW theme issue.
- Organise national/local PR/media activity.

The Week will be followed by an expert symposium on men, physical activity and sport which will aim to develop further policy and practice in this area.





## Benefits of partnership

The Forum is keen to work in partnership with the widest possible range of organisations. Following the successful model developed for previous NMHWs, in 2010 the MHF will be seeking to work with government, the NHS, employers and employers' organisations, local authorities, sports organisations, trade unions, third sector organisations with an interest in improving men's health, and others.

Partners, through their financial and logistical support for NMHW, will benefit from:

- High visibility in a groundbreaking event.
- The use of resources produced for the Week.
- For public sector organisations, support for their work to meet the new requirements of the Gender Equality Duty.
- For commercial organisations, opportunities to meet CSR objectives and to market products and services to a male audience.
- Participation in the development of MHF policy on men and health services.
- An opportunity to receive MHF information and training on men's health.
- An opportunity to develop specific projects and initiatives linked to NMHW.
- An invitation to attend key MHF events throughout the year following the Week.
- All the positive spin-offs that flow from association with a high-profile charity-led event that highlights an important social issue.

NMHW 2009 partners included the Department of Health, Royal Mail, Food Standards Agency, Pfizer, Cancer Research UK, Coventry City Council, Food and Drink Federation, NHS Direct, Royal Society for Public Health, PAGB, South Asian Health Foundation and 10 NHS trusts.

MHF is particularly keen to identify up to five major sponsors of NMHW 2010 which will be given a much higher profile in every aspect of the event.

## For further information

For further information about NMHW 2010,  
including sponsorship opportunities, please contact:

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**MHF**  
**MEN'S HEALTH**  
**FORUM**

[www.menshealthforum.org.uk](http://www.menshealthforum.org.uk)  
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