

Mission:  
To protect, promote & improve the health  
of all people in Florida through integrated  
state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott  
Governor

John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS  
State Surgeon General & Secretary

Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

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## **MEN'S HEALTH MONTH CHALLENGES MEN TO TAKE CHARGE OF THEIR HEALTH**



**TALLAHASSEE**—This Men's Health Month, the Florida Department of Health is encouraging men to take charge of their health. By making the daily choice to eat smarter and move more, men statewide can lower their risk of disease and improve life expectancy.

"Men's Health Month is an opportunity for every man to step on a scale and do a gut check on his weight," said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong. "By building healthy choices into everyday life, men can achieve and stay at healthy weight."

Currently, 71.7 percent of men in Florida are at an unhealthy weight. According to the Harvard Men's Health Watch, unhealthy weight in men can lower testosterone levels, reduce reproductive function and increase the likelihood of kidney stones and some cancers. On average, men also have shorter life expectancies than women, and this can be partially attributed to poor diet and lack of exercise.

By making a commitment and following through with a diet and exercise plan men are guaranteed to lead healthier lives. Throughout the state, Healthiest Weight Florida is working to assist all residents in making informed healthy choices every day. In order to make it easier to eat smart, move more and be "in the know," Healthiest Weight launched Small Steps to Living Healthy. This email-based program allows Floridians to sign up for weekly tips and useful information delivered directly to their inbox. To take the first small steps to living healthy register on Healthiest Weight Florida's [website](#).

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Below are some quick tips from the MyPlate Nutrition Education Series to help men reach that next level of health.

1. **Magic foods do not exist.** There's no magic food or way to eat. Focus on getting a variety of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, protein-rich foods (like beans, eggs, or lean meats) and low-fat dairy. You'll get nutrients you need for overall good health—including magnesium, potassium, calcium, vitamin D, fiber and protein.
2. **If it's there, you'll eat it.** Keep healthy foods in your kitchen that need little preparation. Find healthier heat-and-eat options to replace frozen pizza.
3. **Whole grains help you feel full.** Make sure half your grains are whole grains. Choose whole wheat breads, pasta and crackers; brown rice; and oatmeal instead of white bread, rice or other refined-grain products.
4. **Build habits that don't add pounds.** Cut calories by skipping foods high in solid fats and added sugar. Limit fatty meats like ribs, bacon and hot dogs. Cakes, cookies, candies and ice cream should only be occasional treats. Use smaller plates to adjust the amount of food you eat.
5. **Water is your friend.** Water is a better choice than other sugary drink choices. Beverages can add about 400 calories a day to men's diets.
6. **Wise-up about what's in food.** Use both Nutrition Facts and ingredient labels to discover what nutrients foods and beverages contain. Cut back on foods that have sugar or fat as the first ingredient.
7. **Sweat is good.** Be active whenever you can. Have friends or family join you when you go for a long walk, bike or jog. Vary activities to stay motivated. Set a goal of 2½ hours or more of moderate physical activity a week. Include strengthening your arms, legs and core muscles at least two days a week.
8. **Men's energy needs differ from women's needs.** Find exactly how much and what foods you need based on your height, weight, age and physical activity level on the [USDA website](#).

For more information on Healthiest Weight Florida's other programs, visit their [Activities page](#).

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Healthiest Weight Florida is a public-private collaboration bringing together state agencies, not-for-profit organizations, businesses and entire communities to help Florida's children and adults make consistent, informed choices about healthy eating and active living. To learn more about how to be active and make nutritious food choices, visit [www.healthiestweightflorida.com](http://www.healthiestweightflorida.com).

The department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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