June is “National Men’s Health Month”

By Brandon Fraley
PA-C

Dads get to celebrate Father’s Day in June and they should also celebrate National Men’s Health Month.

The purpose of Men’s Health Month is to increase the awareness of preventable health problems and to show the importance of early detection and treatment.

Due to lack of awareness, poor health education and culturally induced behavior patterns in their work and personal lives, many men aren’t seeking the appropriate medical attention they need. It seems as though men tend to avoid going to a health care provider unless their injury or illness is too significant to avoid or they give in to a request by a family member to go.

Men should use this opportunity to look at how they can lower their risk factors for preventable problems such as heart disease and early detection of diseases like cancer. They can also address male-specific problems such as low testosterone and prostate issues.

Heart disease remains the number one cause of death in men in the United States. Often, heart disease is asymptomatic and people don’t know they have it until there is an event of some sort, such as a heart attack that causes significant problems.

Some of the top risk factors for heart disease are: High blood pressure, high cholesterol, strong family history, smoking and diabetes. Many of these factors can be controlled, but men often are not willing to change their lifestyle or don’t even know they have these issues because they haven’t had a general physical and screening.

Cancer is another leading cause of death in men. There are many types of cancer that with early detection can be successfully treated. There are also risk factors that when changed can reduce the risk of cancer. Screening processes such as a colonoscopy are an effective tool.

Prostate cancer remains a common cancer affecting men. Many people may be familiar with the PSA test as a way to help detect prostate cancer.

There recently has been some increased controversy related to this test but it remains an option and needs discussed with your provider.

Men experience a drop in testosterone levels that starts at age 30 and continues throughout the rest of their lives, but typically levels should never be below normal.

Symptoms of testosterone deficiency include depressed mood, lethargy, reduced energy level, and decreased libido among others. Blood tests can determine whether a man is suffering from testosterone deficiency, and the condition is treatable with hormone replacement therapy in the form of testosterone injections, patches or gels.

Maintaining an ideal body weight can help reduce the risk of high blood pressure and even diabetes in some cases or make diabetes more manageable. Exercise is important and can make you feel better both physically and mentally.

Men should make an appointment for a well male exam to discuss their health and hopefully

get appropriate treatment prior to the development of serious problems.