



THE MYTH OF INVINCIBILITY

WHY SENIOR MEN NEED CARE AND SUPPORT



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June is Men's Health Month in Canada and it's important to raise awareness of health issues that men face as they age.

According to the Canadian Men's Health Foundation, over 70% of men in our country have unhealthy habits, and 80% are stressed. As a result, many are prone to chronic health conditions and a poor quality of life. This is one of many reasons why men's life expectancy is shorter than women's in Canada.

To make matters worse, lots of older men nowadays have been conditioned their entire lives to "tough it out" and were discouraged from seeking treatment.

Men simply didn't ask for help because it was thought to be "less manly". Many also didn't learn how to prepare a nutritious meal due to how traditional gender roles divided up housework.

Furthermore, as men age in place, they also tend to become more isolated as is often the case with seniors in general. However, what makes men particularly susceptible is that they often have fewer social supports in place than women, which is also likely one of the reasons why men are 3x more likely to die from suicide.

Fortunately, this detrimental conditioning has become less prominent amongst men in the younger generations with more public health campaigns dedicated to increasing awareness of men's health issues and tools supporting men's health such as the Canadian Men's Health Foundation Health Check, men are taking their health more seriously and feel more comfortable talking about it.

While future generations of men may age with a better quality of life as they choose to engage in healthier habits and take important health screenings as recommended, we need to ensure that the generation of elderly men currently have the support in place to live out their years at home well.

For many elderly men today, the role of a home care worker cannot be underestimated in supporting their health as they often perform critical tasks that are vital to them aging well at home.

Providing medication reminders, preparing nutritious meals, performing light housekeeping duties, and providing companionship to support their emotional well-being - especially if they are living alone - are just a few of the ways home care providers help older men live better.

As well, for older men who have caregiving responsibilities for their spouse or another family member, having access to affordable, reliable respite care can help their overall mental and physical well-being, allowing them time to care for themselves.

Let's face it, men's health is vital to the functioning of our society. The longer and healthier men live, the better able they are to raise their families, contribute to their workplaces and communities, and enjoy their golden years with their friends and family. If men are healthy and have the necessary support in place to help them age well, we all benefit.