



Men's health: let's check

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With men's health in the spotlight this month, data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) reminds all Australians that lifestyle choices, including smoking, alcohol, diet and exercise can influence how long a man lives.

Latest ABS figures show that a boy born in Australia today can expect to live 80.4 years, up from 75.0 years in 1995.

Dr Paul Jelfs, ABS General Manager of Population and Social Statistics, said that while fewer men are smoking daily or drinking at risky levels, more men are overweight or obese today.

"The daily smoking rate for Australian men has dropped from 27 per cent in 1995 to 17 per cent currently," said Dr Jelfs.

"Over the past decade, risky drinking has been dropping, with around one quarter of men drinking more than two standard drinks a day currently, down from one third in 2004-05."

However, not all the data is positive; the most recent figures show that 71 per cent of men aged 18 years and over are overweight or obese, an increase from 64 per cent in 1995.

"The types of food consumed and how active men are can impact their overall health," said Dr Jelfs.

"While diets high in added sugars can be associated with weight gain, physical activity helps to maintain good health."

In 2011-12, Australian men aged 19 years and over consumed 59 grams of added sugars per day on average, equivalent to around 14 level teaspoons of white sugar. Soft drinks and flavoured mineral water accounted for 22 per cent of this added sugar consumption.

"Meanwhile around half (49 per cent) of Australian men aged 18-64 years participated in sufficient physical activity of 150 minutes a week over five sessions," said Dr Jelfs.

Men can also take action to look after their health by screening for skin, bowel and other cancers. In 2014-15, over half (55 per cent) of all men aged 18 years and over regularly checked their skin for changes in freckles and moles.

Further information can be found in National Health Survey: First Results (cat. no. 4364.0.55.001), Australian Health Survey: Consumption of added sugars, 2011-12 (cat. no. 4364.0.55.011), Life Tables,

States, Territories and Australia, 2013-2015 (cat. no. 3302.0.55.001), which are all available for free download from the ABS website.

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