

health

FINE TUNING

EVERY MAN'S BODY REQUIRES REGULAR MAINTENANCE. SAVIA RAJAGOPAL LOOKS INTO THE ESSENTIAL HEALTH CHECKS HE SHOULD UNDERGO

How often have you seen a man tinkering around under the hood of his car? Every sound, every movement is minutely scrutinised till his machine runs smoothly, without any hassle. It's ironic that men take more interest in their cars than their own bodies! Many studies show that men are less likely to get regular medical check-ups done, as compared to women. It has also been found that men tend to ignore small health problems and only seek medical advice once the problem becomes very serious and by then, the health issues magnify greatly. All doctors stress the importance of regular health checks to detect problems before they become serious sources of worry.

20s

COMMON HEALTH PROBLEMS: "20s is around the time when people are beginning their careers; so many men are overworked and stressed. Men who work in software or IT-related fields, suffer from muscular skeletal problems such as cervical spondilitis, tendonitis, and pain in the fingers," states Dr. Anil Ballani, consultant physician, P D Hinduja and Lilavati hospital.

HEALTH CHECKS: "The health checks that a man should do include the basic blood investigation, a routine X-ray and a urine and stool examination. The frequency should be once in two years till the age of 35, unless there are specific complaints," advises Dr. Ballani. While the 20s are a time where you're meant to enjoy life and juggle various commitments, one has to think of the long-term repercussions of a hectic lifestyle and unhealthy living. Added to that, is the possibility of having a family history of illness. Dr. Shalini Suralkar, consultant physician, H L

Hiranandani hospital advises, "If there is a family history of respiratory illnesses, diabetes or high cholesterol, a man should get himself checked in the 20s. In addition, he can undergo some basic general tests such as a complete blood test, a random blood sugar test, and a Pulmonary Function Test (PFT)."

30s

COMMON HEALTH PROBLEMS: All doctors unanimously agree that stress and lifestyle patterns to a great extent affect an individual's health and wellness. However, they also emphasise that small changes can have positive effects. And this is the age group when often ignored problems surface. In their 30s, men tend to suffer from diabetes and blood pressure problems, and if there is a family history, then even cardiac problems can occur. **HEALTH CHECKS:** Dr. Suralkar claims that medical tests for men in this age group are more or less the same as

the 20s. However, as one ages, the tests should be more exhaustive to cover a wide range of possibilities. Dr. Ballani reiterates, "Blood tests should be more exhaustive, blood sugar has to be tested on fasting and post lunch. One should also go for a lipid profile and a stress test."

40s

COMMON HEALTH PROBLEMS: In the 40s, many men battle hypertension, diabetes, heart disease and high cholesterol. Very often, lack of detection of certain health problems and ignorance to a great extent can compound illnesses. **HEALTH CHECKS:** Says Dr. Suralkar, "In

addition to the above-mentioned tests for younger men, a man in his 40s should do a lipid profile, check his blood pressure, fasting and post-lunch blood sugar tests. He should also get an ECG done." Dr. Ballani explains that there is a higher incidence of diabetes, heart diseases in the 40s. A stress test is an absolute must.

50⁺

COMMON HEALTH PROBLEMS: Ophthalmic (vision) related problems, prostate cancer, hearing problems are the most common ailments in this age group. **HEALTH CHECKS:** "A man in his 50s should definitely get a prostate check-up and sonography done. A specific test called Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) should be conducted," says Dr. Suralkar. To shed further light, Dr. Ballani elaborates, "Men who are post 50, should get ophthalmic checks done regularly to rule out vision problems. Also, cancer checks should be conducted. Smoking and alcohol take its toll at this age and an ENT test is recommended to check for cancer in the throat, etc."

