

Wellness Articles

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If you would like to be added to the distribution list for these articles, please email: Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca. You will receive a monthly email containing articles for the upcoming four weeks.

An archive of past wellness articles is available at <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/9966.asp>

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Unmasking men's mental health

Overall, women are about twice as likely as men to be diagnosed with a mental illness. Part of the reason for this is that men only make about two thirds as many doctor visits as women do. And when men do see a doctor, they are often reluctant to talk about what's really bothering them, especially if it has anything to do with feelings or mood.

Plus, most men don't realize that some of the physical things like chronic pain and digestive problems could actually be caused by a mental health concern such as depression, anxiety, or stress.

And then there are men who know (or who at least strongly suspect) that they have a problem, but they suffer in silence, afraid to admit that they need help. Afraid others will find out their secret and they'll be perceived as weak or wimpy, or that they'll lose their job.

What Can Affect Your Mental Health?

- Your genes (some mental health issues run in families)
- Divorce, separation, or the breakup of a long term relationship
- The death of a loved one
- Losing your job, or job changes
- Financial problems or going through bankruptcy
- Coping with a natural disaster
- Moving to a new home
- Marriage
- Getting a promotion at work
- Caring for an aging parent
- The birth of your child
- Being diagnosed and living with a serious illness, or suffering a major injury
- Serving in the military, especially in combat
- Sometimes lots of little things build up and the combination can be extremely harmful.



The Big Question: Am I Normal?

Everyone has their ups and downs from time to time. Most wonder at least one time in their life whether what they are feeling is normal, or whether they need professional help. Unfortunately, there's no single answer that's right for everyone. However, here's a good rule of thumb: you need to seek help if you've been having symptoms every day for more than two weeks, and if those symptoms keep you from enjoying life, performing at work, or maintaining relationships with friends, your partner, or your children.

Contact your family doctor or the nearest counselling services in your area.

Provincial Help Lines

Health Link (24 hour)	811
Mental Health Help Line	1-877-303-2642
Credit Counselling of AB	1-888-294-0076
Addictions Help Line	1-866-332-2322