

## WELLBEING

# Men's Health Week: Protecting yourself from COVID-19



According to data analysis from the Men's Health Forum, 59% of excess deaths reported in April 2020 were male.

On the 15th - 21st June, the world acknowledges Men's Health Week 2020. The campaign is organised by the Men's Health Forum and aims to raise awareness of preventable health problems that disproportionately affect men and encourage them to gain the courage to tackle their issues without stigma.

While there are numerous health concerns that are statistically more common in men, such as suicide, alcohol abuse and heart disease, there have been increasing reports that the recent COVID-19 outbreak is posing a greater risk to men than women.

This is why this Men's Health Week, we will be highlighting the relationship between the coronavirus outbreak and men's health, as well as top tips on the most effective methods of avoiding the virus.

## COVID-19 & men's health

At the time of writing, the latest figures from the World Health Organization (WHO) have **found** that 63% of deaths related to COVID-19 in Europe have been among men.

In regards to what occupations have been affected the most, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) have **reported** that men working as road transport drivers, including taxi, bus and lorry drivers are among those who at the highest risk being affected by COVID-19.

## Why are men more likely to be affected by COVID-19?

At the time of writing, there isn't a definitive reason why men are statistically more affected than women by the COVID-19 pandemic. The reasons could be biological, cultural and/or behavioural.

Experts have suggested that due to the differences in immune systems between men and women, this may play a part in women having stronger immune defences, thus improving their chances in beating off the virus.

It is also known that the virus is more dangerous for people with existing health issues, particularly cardiovascular problems and hypertension - both of which disproportionately affect men.

Research has found that this is partially due to behavioural problems in men, as on **average** more men indulge in unhealthy lifestyle habits, such as smoking and excessive drinking, than women.

With a recent audit of adult critical care **showing** that men make up 70% of COVID-19 patients in critical care, it's clear that men may have to consider taking extra precautions in avoiding the virus.

## Avoiding COVID-19: top tips

**1. Social distance** - remain at least two meters apart from anyone outside of your household. For example, if you enter a supermarket, engage in exercise outside or if travelling for work purposes.

**2. Wash your hands** - often with antibacterial soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after you have been in a public place or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.

**3. Cover your mouth and nose** - with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Make sure that you put used tissues in the bin immediately, avoid touching your face afterwards and wash your hands as soon as possible.

**4. Don't smoke** - while smoking, the chances of transmitting the virus is increased when the smokers fingers touches their mouth.

It's important to know that regardless of your gender, we are all susceptible to contracting COVID-19, and that we should all be putting measures in place to protect ourselves from the illness.

*All information and guidance provided within this article is in line with the UK government's guidelines at the time of publication (May 2020). For the most recent information and updates on the COVID-19 outbreak, please visit of [Employee FAQs](#) page.*

It's important to know that if you need to access our services to discuss any concerns you may have, our [confidential helpline](#) is available 24/7, 365.

TOPICAL

# Growing for Wellbeing Week

1st – 7th June 2020



On 1st - 7th June, we acknowledge Growing for Wellbeing Week 2020 - the wellbeing movement that celebrates the physical and mental wellbeing benefits of gardening and growing your own produce.

Founded by social enterprise Life at No.27, the campaign aims to demonstrate the power of gardening and its ability to "support anyone struggling with isolation, mental and physical ill health."

Due to many of us spending a lot more time at home because of the COVID-19 outbreak, Growing for Wellbeing Week is the perfect opportunity to educate ourselves on how we can lead a more sustainable lifestyle, by growing our own produce.

## How can gardening improve my wellbeing?

The emotional benefits of gardening have been well documented. Studies have found spending time gardening can help people through a period of difficulty in their lives, helping them restore balance and regain control.

According to research sessions conducted by **Thrive**, 80% of participants reported better mental health as a result of gardening, with 93% saying they had

improved their confidence and motivation.

Here, we have listed a few of the mental and physical wellbeing benefits of getting more involved with your garden:

**Exercise** - Research has found that a three to four hour session of gardening can burn as many calories as an hour at the gym. Which in turn, will help your body release endorphins resulting in an increased mood.

**Reduces stress** - Taking part in a physical activity such as gardening, allows us to distract our minds from everyday stressors and focus on the task at hand.

**Self-esteem boost** - By growing produce and keeping plants healthy, our self-esteem and confidence will receive a well-deserved boost.

**Control** - When your usual routine comes to a halt, it can make us feel as though we have less control in our life than we thought. Organising a garden or veg patch will help you regain control in one area of your life, resulting in a sense of achievement.

## How can I get involved?

Getting involved with Growing for Wellbeing Week is easy; you just need to grow something! Whether is in your garden, allotment, on your balcony or inside the home, there are endless ways in which you can feel the positive effects of growing your own produce.

You don't need a garden to reap the wellbeing rewards of growing your own

produce. If you don't have an outdoor space to grow vegetables or plants, here are a few alternative ways on how you get involved with Growing for Wellbeing Week:

**Houseplants** - affordable, easy to care for and offer an opportunity to experiment with planting and growing different plants.

**Chilli and herb plants** - simply require a windowsill, sunlight and a little care.

**Regrow from scraps** - don't throw away scrap veg! There are many foods that you can regrow from scraps, such as potatoes, onions, garlic, kale and leeks. It's free and doesn't require a lot of space!

Starting a new hobby can be daunting for some, especially if they are unfamiliar with the project. We recommend that you begin with small, achievable tasks such as weeding, to help you take your mind off any worries or concerns you may have. Then, as your confidence builds, you can move onto larger projects.

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Or alternatively, visit our portal to view advice articles, webinars and 4-week programmes all aimed at improving your physical and mental wellbeing: [www.healthassuredeap.com](http://www.healthassuredeap.com)

## LEGAL

# Equality: LGBTQ+ Focus



Equality is ensuring that every individual possesses the same rights and has equal opportunities.

A key decade in the development of equality was the 1970's, when Britain began to develop legislation that would protect certain groups of people from unfair discrimination. The Equality Act 2010 came into force on the 1st October 2010, consolidating over 116 separate pieces of legislation to harmonise the law in this area.

The Act provides a legislative framework to protect the rights of all individuals against any unfair treatment or discrimination, and to promote equality and diversity between people from different groups and backgrounds.

The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate against another because of certain protected characteristics relating to; age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Act protects individuals from sexual orientation discrimination. This primarily protects lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals from discrimination, harassment and victimisation due to their sexual orientation. Gender reassignment is a separate protected characteristic under the Act and protects transgender individuals from being treated less favourably because they propose to, starts or has completed a

process to change their gender.

## Same Sex Marriage

The introduction of Legislation in England and Wales (the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013), and in Scotland (the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Act 2014) enabled same sex couples to legally marry and convert civil partnerships into marriage. This provides same sex couples the same legal rights as heterosexual marriages. The legislation also permits transgender individuals to change their legal gender status without having to end their existing marriage.

## Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland same-sex marriage laws have taken longer to develop than the rest of the United Kingdom. Whilst same-sex sexual activity has been legal since 1982 and civil partnerships legal since 2005, same-sex couples have only been able to register to marry more recently. Same sex marriages became legally recognised in Northern Ireland on the 13th January 2020, under the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation Act etc.) Act 2019.

## Pride Events

The LGBTQ+ rights movement has made significant progress over the past few decades, with the first Pride parade taking place in New York City in 1970. Since then, the recognition of LGBTQ+ rights have continued to develop, and communities have come together in celebration and unity through Pride events. These events are opportunities for like-minded individuals to join to celebrate who they

are, and to continue to raise awareness by fighting for equal rights for the LGBTQ+ community. Pride events now take place around the whole world, including various Pride events across the UK.

## LGBTQ+ Current Challenges

On 19th October 2019, the Home Office published figures showing the growth in hate crime over the past year (2018-2019). Hate crime towards sexual orientation has increased by 25% and by 37% for transgender identity. The LGBTQ+ community continue to face physical and verbal abuse about who they are and what they believe in.

Hate crime can cause individuals to feel unsafe outside of their homes and it is therefore imperative that the community and workplaces make efforts to ensure people know they are welcome to express their whole self. For example, creating a dedicated LGBTQ+ group in the workplace to focus on generating awareness of current challenges allows individuals to feel comfortable and welcome, whilst striving for equality.

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