

## **Dr Louise Wigen - Celebrating men's health**

This newsletter focuses on men's health and is sent to you as a reminder to do your own self-examinations in addition to your annual health checks. Hopefully this serves also to provide some information for women to pass on to their spouses, brothers, fathers and sons.

Movember was founded 18 years ago to raise awareness of men's health issues, such as prostate cancer, testicular cancer, as well as mental health and suicide prevention. Every November, men across the world grow their best moustache in support of "changing the face of men's health".

Testicular cancers are rare and usually found in young males between the ages of 15-39. It usually presents with a small painless lump in the testicle which is located inside the scrotal sac. These tumours are most often found by patients themselves. Any discomfort in the testes should be examined by a medical practitioner and if necessary, ultrasound tests can be arranged to evaluate further. The earlier testicular cancer is diagnosed the better the outcomes.

Prostate cancers are more often diagnosed in men older than 50. Prostate cancer is most often asymptomatic. Systemic symptoms like weight loss or bone pain will occur in 20% of patients. Men may notice difficulty starting or ending micturition (urination) or they may notice difficulty with their urine stream. A PSA blood test may be useful as a screening test for prostate cancer. A rectal examination however is always advised in conjunction with the blood test.

Depression and suicidal ideation (thoughts) often go undetected in men because societal gender roles dictate that when men express emotion they are not "real men". Men tend to suppress their emotions in order to appear "strong" and "manly". Statistics show that women will more easily seek help than will men for mental health issues. Men need to be aware that there are medical professionals available to support them through these dark moments.

So I challenge our men to grow your best moustache for the month of November thus reminding everyone of the unique health issues that men need to be aware of.

December is around the corner ... we plan to stay open over the Christmas period working until 1pm every working day from 23 - 30 December.

Yours in health

house

Dr Louise Wiggins

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