



MRJ LEADER LETTER

INFORMATION FOR THE LEADERS OF THE MEN OF REFORM JUDAISM

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MRJ's Health Initiative

MRJ is focusing on a Men's Health initiative *for* the men of Brotherhood, *with* the men of Brotherhood, and *by* the men of Brotherhood.

DID YOU KNOW?

1. **One third of American men have not had a checkup in the past five years. Nine million haven't seen a physician in five years.**
2. *Before age 65, men suffer 2.5 times more heart attacks than women.*
3. **By age 65, one in three men suffers from high blood pressure.**
4. *One in nine men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer, a leading cause of cancer death in men--- 2.8 million cases are reported annually.*
5. **One out of three male strokes occurs before age 65.**
6. *Each year, more than 50,000 men die of emphysema.*
7. **Nearly one-third of men with Type 2 diabetes, or 2.5 million men, are under diagnosed.**
8. *The average life expectancy for women is 79.5 years and 73.8 years for men.*
9. **Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in men.**

MRJ proposes four goals for its Men's Health Initiative:

1. To create a safe place (physically, emotionally, and spiritually) in which our members can engage and address the health issues each faces;
2. To educate our members on relevant men's - specific health issues;
3. To empower our members to undertake self-assessment techniques and preventative measures to improve their health; and,
4. To encourage our members to be proactive with respect to their health before it becomes a crisis.

MRJ encourages every Brotherhood to create men's health programming in a setting which will allow for confidentiality, openness and sensitivity. The synagogue setting for Men's Health programming creates a spiritual reservoir that cannot be found elsewhere. We suggest that each Brotherhood identify *local* physicians, pharmacists, and mental health professionals to be part of a *health resources committee*. We also would suggest that local Brotherhoods identify *statewide* and *national* organizations which could be instrumental in program development and Men of Reform Judaism (MRJ) will work with you if need be to identify these resources.

In conjunction with this initiative we are strongly encouraging Brotherhoods to schedule a health program which will coincide with Men's National Health Week which this year is June 9-15, 2008.

Check out www.nationalmenshealthweek.org for additional resources and information.

Don't wait. Start now!

MRJ Supports National Men's Health Week

The following resolution was passed at the 41st Biennial Convention of MRJ (formerly the North American Federation of Temple Brotherhoods) in May 2007:

WHEREAS, through **MRJ's Men's Health Initiative**, MRJ has presented programs to its members on men's health issues, specifically prostate cancer, heart disease and stress.

WHEREAS through **MRJ's Men's Health Initiative**, MRJ and its members cannot only empower themselves with knowledge, but can also fulfill the important mitzvah of helping others save lives.

WHEREAS **MRJ** realizes that men need a safe and perhaps even spiritual space in which our members can address the issue of their own health in a meaningful way.

WHEREAS the Torah commands us, "Be very careful of your soul" (Deut. 4:15), and our Sages explain that this obliges us to take care of our health (Talmud, Berachot 32b),

BE IT RESOLVED that MRJ encourages its constituent members to be proactive with respect to their health before it becomes a crisis, and we strongly endorse the concept of National Men's Health Week.

National Men's Health Week celebrates the extraordinary progress in men's health and recognizes that more needs to be done to safeguard the health of men for generations to come.



Symptoms To Take Seriously

“Symptoms to take Seriously...”*

Why is it that when a man hears a noise in his car, he runs to the gas station or a mechanic as soon as he can, but when his body tells him when something is wrong, he doesn't run to his doctor? Might that be a reason for men to have a higher mortality rate than women? Young men possibly may be able to ignore these signs, but as men get older, these signs may get worse over time. Yes, there are some symptoms that men, no matter what their age, should always take seriously.

1. **Chest pain.** *It might feel as if an elephant is sitting on your chest. Either call an ambulance or have someone drive you to an ER. However, some signs of a heart attack are not as obvious, such as left arm pain, jaw pain, sweating and shortness of breath. Sometimes after exercise, chest pain can last a few minutes, then will go away. This is a condition called angina. Can you absolutely tell the difference between heartburn and angina?*
2. **Shortness of breath.** *Lying in bed at night after walking up a flight of stairs or walking a block or so earlier is a sign that you should call your doctor immediately because this might mean your heart is getting weak. This is also called congestive heart failure.*
3. **Unintended weight loss.** *Many of us are trying to lose weight, but what does it mean when you are losing weight without really trying. It could mean an overactive thyroid gland which is benign, but it could also be the first hint of cancer.*
4. **Blood in the urine or stool.** *This might be tougher to see, because you might not want to look. What is at stake here is that there should be no blood in the urine or stool. Cysts, stones, infection, or inflammation can be the cause, but so can cancer of the kidneys or bladder. Bright red blood in the stool is probably hemorrhoids, but if the stool is dark or tarry, colon cancer must be ruled out, and this is done by a colonoscopy procedure. Blood in the stool can also originate from a bleeding ulcer or from diverticulitis.*
5. **Changes in urination.** *If you get up too many times to go to the bathroom, have trouble getting a urine started or passing urine, you might be showing signs of an enlarged prostate. As men get older, the prostate grows and this is called benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH). This condition is not life threatening, but it can also be prostate cancer which has similar symptoms and is life threatening. Also, increased visits to the bathroom can also mean diabetes is present. This is a serious disease that could lead to heart and kidney disease.*
6. **Leg swelling.** *If your ankles, feet, or legs swell, do not ignore it. The swelling which is called edema could be a warning of kidney, heart, or liver disease. There are medications called diuretics that will reduce the swelling, but you need to see a doctor about the underlying cause: Are the kidneys not filtering properly? Is the heart not pumping as it should? Is the liver congested? A doctor can run tests to determine the cause.*
7. **Skin lesions that don't go away.** *If a skin lesion is not on the face, do not ignore it. These skin ulcers that don't heal after a few days could mean there is a circulation problem,*

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or could be a sign of diabetes, or if it grows larger and changes shape or color, it could a sign of skin cancer. If caught early enough, the chances for a full recovery are great.

[*Excerpted from: Mishori, Dr. Ranit, " 7 Symptoms Men Should Never Ignore", Parade Magazine, June 17, 2007]

Consistent with the Talmud's teaching that when a man is in pain, he should visit a physician (B.BK 46b), MRJ would like its members to empower themselves with knowledge so that we can fulfill the important mitzvah of helping others save lives. Next year National Men's Health Week is June 9-15, 2008. Help your brothers by holding a Men's Health Fair that week. In this Bulletin is an example of a health event. You can use it as a model. Use local physicians, pharmacists, and mental health professionals to be part of a health resources committee. Help our members lead healthier lives.

What One Brotherhood Did: A Health Fair

MEN'S HEALTH FAIR Welcome

Welcome to the 2003 Temple Adat Shalom Men's Club *Men's Health Fair*. We sincerely wish that you are able to obtain significant medical information – information that will allow you to make informed decisions. We hope that this event will encourage you to take proactive charge of your own medical care and increase your awareness of your body and its signals.

You'll notice that we have taken some security measures to restrict the access to this event to a single entry and exit point. Unless there is an emergency, we ask that you respect the Emergency Exit Only signs.

The traffic pattern in the parking lot has been altered to maximize throughput for this kind of event. You entered the parking lot into the first parking row. Upon exiting the fair, please ignore the one-way arrows painted on the ground in the middle parking row. Proceed to the WEST and turn left to the third row in order to exit.

Thanks,



Bill Yellin, Programming Chair
Temple Adat Shalom Men's Club
Proudly affiliated with the
North American Federation of Temple Brotherhoods

MEN'S HEALTH FAIR

Registration

Please read the Disclaimer and fill out the bottom of this form:

PLEASE NOTE:

The healthcare professionals participating in the Men's Health Fair are independent of and have no affiliation with Temple Adat Shalom or Temple Adat Shalom Men's Club. They receive no financial contribution from Temple Adat Shalom or the Temple Adat Shalom Men's Club. Temple Adat Shalom/Temple Adat Shalom Men's Club has merely provided the forum and location for the Men's Health Fair. Temple Adat Shalom/Temple Adat Shalom Men's Club is in no manner responsible for the content or accuracy of the information, or the quality of any services provided by the professional healthcare providers to individuals participating in the Men's Health Fair.

Name (please print)	
Address (required)	
City, State Zip Code (required)	
Phone (optional)	
Email Address (optional)	

I have read and understood the above Disclaimer:

Signature:

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Layout: Stu Aaronson

If you have an interesting piece of material to share with other MRJ leaders, please submit it electronically as a Word file (.doc) with separate graphics not part of the Word file. We prefer graphics as .cdr, .eps, .ai but can often use high resolution .tif files. Submit files attached to an email to Doug Barden (DBarden @urj.org) with a copy to Stu Aaronson (aaronsonsj@aol.com).