

Hometown Hospital



Hometown health

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TOP 7 HEALTH ISSUES FOR MEN

SCHOOLING UP ON BRAIN HEALTH

Country Music Legend

Randy Owen

Talks About Music, Migraines and Vertigo

This Issue:

FOCUS

on

MEN'S HEALTH

 Hometown HOSPITAL

Checking in with Randy Owen

Two years Ago, the lead singer for the famed country music band *Alabama* began suffering cluster migraines and headaches

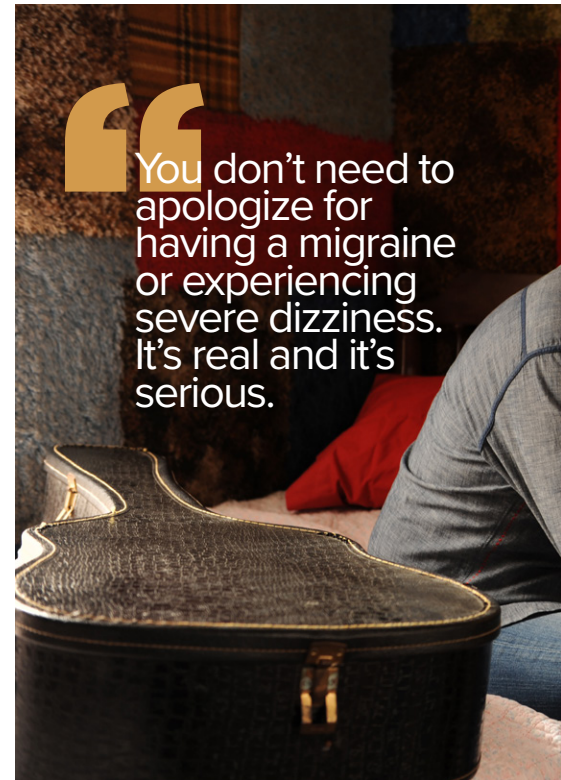
AS THE MOST SUCCESSFUL band in country music history, Alabama has amassed more than 40 #1 hits and sold more than 75 million albums. But in August 2019, the band had to cancel the second half of its 50th Anniversary Tour when lead singer Randy Owen began experiencing severe vertigo and cluster migraine headaches. *My Hometown Health* recently talked with Randy from his home at the base of Lookout Mountain in northeast Alabama to discuss his recent health struggles and his hopeful return to the road.

When did you realize you had a medical issue?

The vertigo came first. I was doing my usual stretches one morning when I suddenly became totally disoriented. It felt like I was losing all sense of where I was, like I was dying. I could still see a bit, but I couldn't move or stand up. I'd lost all control of my body. I told my wife that I loved her because I thought that was the end. Since then, I've had other episodes of dizziness but never anything like that. It was a horrible feeling.

What about the headaches?

The headaches come and go. The pain moves around. One side of my head will hurt and the next day, it's the other side. The pain can be in my eyes, my forehead or the back of my head. It's excruciating—much, much worse than a normal headache. One time, it was so



“You don't need to apologize for having a migraine or experiencing severe dizziness. It's real and it's serious.

bad, I thought my right eyeball was going to fall out.

What did the doctors say about your symptoms?

Well, I've had every kind of test you can imagine and nobody can figure out what's wrong with me. The pain pills I was prescribed did absolutely no good, even made me lose my voice.

What caused you to cancel the 50th Anniversary Tour?

We were about midway through the tour in 2019. I was trying really hard to keep going, but it just got to the point where I couldn't continue. Sometimes, when I walked out on the stage and saw the bright lights and heard the crowd, I would start feeling dizzy and thought I was going to fall off the stage or the six-foot-wide runway. But then, once the music started, I was able to get past it because I was concentrating on the song. I was worn out that summer, physically and psychologically. After so many years of touring, I think my body was just telling me to stop. Being in the entertainment business can



really take its toll—so many long bus trips, flights, and being on the road.

So what have you done for treatment?

Well, first and foremost, being able to get away from touring and get some rest has been a big help. About a month or two after we got off the road, I started feeling better. Getting out in nature helps me to relax, too. I love hunting or fishing, riding my tractor or getting on my four-wheeler. They all help me take my mind off the pain. Massages and taking a long hot bath really work, too.



So how are you doing today?

Some days are really good and some days not so much. Sometimes, when I turn my head sideways too quickly, I'll feel dizzy. But on the whole, I'm feeling much better, and I'm very thankful for that. We're still hoping that Alabama can hit the road again once COVID is over and play all those shows we had to cancel.

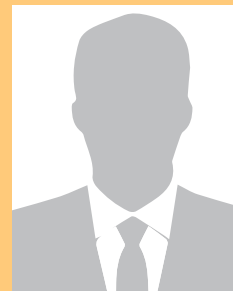
What advice do you have for people who are suffering from migraines or vertigo?

Don't ignore it or try to tough it out. Some people may tell you that, but it's the wrong advice. Find the medical help and support you need. And remember, you don't need to apologize for having a migraine or experiencing severe dizziness. It's real and it's serious.

Any final thoughts?

One more if I could. Ten years ago, I was diagnosed with prostate cancer. Fortunately, we caught it early because I was having regular prostate screenings. I chose High-Intensity Focused Ultrasound (HiFU) for my treatment, and today I'm cancer-free. So, I just really want to encourage all men to talk to their doctor about prostate screening. If you don't have your health, you don't have anything. ■

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO



JOHN DOE, CEO

It's Time to *Man Up!*

THINK MEN ARE the stronger sex? Think again. When it comes to lifelong health, men fall well behind. Compared to women, men are more likely to drink alcohol and use tobacco, both unhealthy choices. Men are also more likely to die from heart disease and lung cancer and to be diagnosed with skin cancer and Parkinson's disease. Men are also far less likely to see a primary care provider for regular checkups and medical screenings, which can detect disease at its early stages, when the success rate for treatment is much higher. It's no wonder, then, that men have a five-year shorter life span than women. At Hometown Hospital, we want to encourage every man to schedule regular visits with your primary care provider. If you don't have one, let us help. Visit our website to find a provider.

► **For more information, visit hometownhospital.com**

BRAIN HEALTH 101

DISEASES OF THE BRAIN are more common than most people think, impacting the lives of one in six people. Here are some of the most common medical conditions related to brain health.

Migraine Headaches

More than 39 million Americans have suffered migraines, a severe, throbbing pain, usually on one side of the head, and often accompanied by nausea, vomiting and extreme sensitivity to light and sound. Like Randy Owen, about one-fourth of those who suffer from migraines also experience vertigo, the sensation of feeling off balance or dizzy.

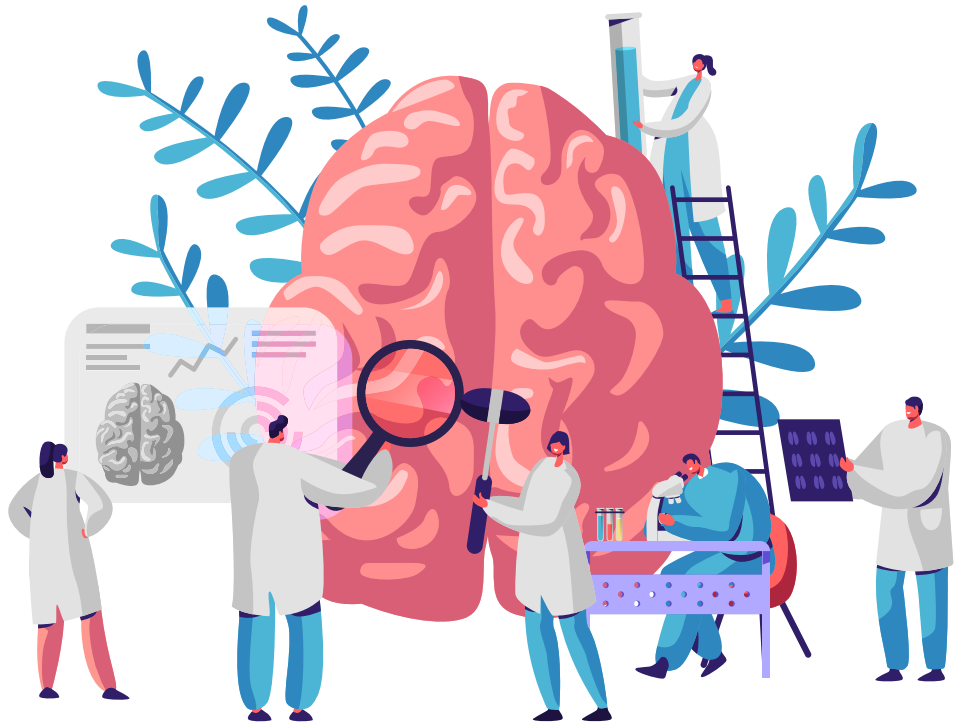
Stroke

A stroke occurs when the blood supply to the brain is interrupted or reduced. Almost 800,000 Americans suffer a stroke each year. Use the letters F.A.S.T. to remember the signs of a stroke, which requires immediate medical attention to prevent brain cells from dying:

- ▶ **F**ace drooping on one side or is numb
- ▶ **A**rm weakness or numbness in one arm
- ▶ **S**peech is slurred or the person is unable to speak
- ▶ **T**ime to call 9-1-1 if you notice any of these symptoms

Parkinson's Disease

This disorder of the nervous system occurs when nerve cells in the area of the brain that controls movement become impaired. The average age of diagnosis is 60.



Symptoms include:

- ▶ Tremors, often beginning in the hands or fingers
- ▶ Slowed movement that makes simple tasks like walking more difficult and time-consuming
- ▶ Rigid muscles that can be painful and limit range of motion
- ▶ Stooped posture and balance difficulties
- ▶ Changes in speech and handwriting

Dementia

Dementia is the general term used to describe the loss of memory, language and other thinking abilities to the point where they interfere with daily life. The most common form of dementia is Alzheimer's, which accounts for 60 to 80 percent of cases. Symptoms can include:

- ▶ Problems with short-term memory
- ▶ Not remembering to pay bills or prepare meals
- ▶ Forgetting appointments

Who To See

If you or a loved one is experiencing any of the symptoms described in this article, you should talk to your primary care provider or see a neurologist, a physician who specializes in the treatment of the brain and nervous system.



John Doe, MD
Specialty



Prostate Health:

What Men Need to Know



Randy Owen was 60 years old when he was diagnosed with prostate cancer. He's not alone. One out of eight men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer during their lifetime.

1 Risk Factors

Some of the highest risk factors for prostate cancer include:

- **Age:** The risk of prostate cancer increases as men grow older.
- **Race:** African-American men have a higher risk of developing and dying from the disease.
- **Family History:** Men with a close family member, such as a father, uncle or brother, diagnosed with prostate cancer before age 65 have a greater risk.
- **Diet:** Eating foods that are high in animal fats increases the risk.

2 Symptoms

In its early stages, prostate cancer may have no signs or symptoms. That's the reason it's so important to talk to your primary care provider about your screening options. The following symptoms may indicate a more advanced form of the cancer. Talk to your primary care provider if these symptoms persist:

- Trouble urinating
- Decreased force in the urine stream
- Blood in the urine
- Blood in the semen
- Bone pain
- Losing weight without trying
- Erectile dysfunction



John Doe, MD
Specialty

3 Screening

There are two screening tests for prostate cancer: a PSA blood test and a digital rectal exam. Before any screening begins, the American Cancer Society recommends that men first discuss their options with their healthcare provider in order to make an informed choice. This discussion should take place at:

- **Age 50** for men who are at average risk
- **Age 45** for men who are at high risk: African-Americans and men with a first-degree relative (father, uncle or brother) diagnosed with prostate cancer before age 65
- **Age 40** for men who are at even higher risk: Have more than one first-degree relative who had prostate cancer before age 65

► **For more, visit HometownHospital.com**

WHY WOMEN LIVE LONGER How Men Can Close the Gender Longevity Gap

IT'S A FACT: WOMEN LIVE LONGER THAN MEN—about five years longer on average. Any visit to a nursing home or assisted living facility can confirm there is a gender gap among the elderly.

So why do men have shorter life spans than women? The reasons are many. Boys and men are more likely to die in accidents or from violence, including suicide. On the whole, men engage in more dangerous professions, such as the military. Men are also 50 percent more likely to die of heart disease at a younger age.

Fortunately, there is one factor that men can easily address if they want to live longer. **See your primary care provider!** Regular physical exams and recommended medical screenings can detect serious health risks, such as high blood pressure and diabetes, before they become serious



medical conditions. Unfortunately, almost 60 percent of men don't regularly see their healthcare provider, going only if they are seriously ill. In fact, women are 33 percent more likely to see a healthcare provider and 100 percent more likely to have their recommended medical screenings.

Men: It's time do better! If you would like see a primary care provider, please visit our website at _____ and click on _____ to find a doctor. Or call us at _____.

Sources: CDC, American Cancer Society, American Medical Association

The Top 7 Health Issues Facing Men

THIS EDITION OF *MY HOMETOWN HEALTH* has been dedicated to raising awareness and increasing understanding about men's health issues. On the previous page we discussed prostate cancer, the second leading cause of cancer death in American men. Here, we take a look at seven more of the most common health issues facing men so they'll know the symptoms, be able to detect them early and see the right medical specialist for treatment.

Heart Disease:

At least 48 percent of adult Americans have some form of heart disease, the narrowing or blockage of the arteries or veins that provide oxygen and blood to the body. Left untreated, heart disease can lead to heart failure or stroke.

There are several different types of heart disease. Three of the most common are:

- **Coronary Heart Disease** occurs when the arteries that supply blood to the heart become hardened and narrowed.
- **High Blood Pressure** occurs when the pressure of the blood against the walls of the arteries consistently exceeds 130/80, forcing the heart to work harder to pump blood throughout the body. Also known as hypertension, high blood pressure is the most common form of heart disease.
- **Atherosclerosis**, also known as hardening of the arteries, is caused by a buildup of cholesterol and calcium deposits (plaque) inside the lining of the arteries.

The first step in the fight against heart disease is to schedule an annual physical exam and have your blood pressure checked regularly.

► **Who To See:** A Cardiologist specializes in the treatment of the cardiovascular system, which includes the heart and blood vessels.

Our team of cardiologists, nurses, dieticians and physical therapists can help you stop smoking, manage your blood pressure, create a heart-healthy diet, and develop an exercise program customized to your specific needs and goals.

Diabetes

More than 34 million Americans suffer from diabetes, a condition in which the body does not properly convert food into energy. Another 88 million Americans have prediabetes, when blood sugar levels are higher than normal. Left untreated, diabetes can severely damage the eyes, kidneys and nervous system as well as lead to a stroke or a heart attack.

There are two types of diabetes. Type 1 usually occurs in childhood or adolescence. Type 2 diabetes, which accounts for more than 90 percent of all cases, usually occurs in people 45 and older. Signs of diabetes include:

- **Hunger and fatigue**
- **Urinating more often**
- **Experiencing thirst more often**
- **Dry mouth and itchy skin**
- **Blurred vision**

Anyone who is overweight and 45 or older should be tested for diabetes. All it takes is a simple blood test, performed by your primary care provider.

► **Who To See:** An Endocrinologist specializes in treating the glands of the endocrine system, including the pancreas, the gland involved in diabetes.



John Doe, MD
Specialty

Liver Disease

The liver sits just under the rib cage on the right side of the body. Liver disease can be inherited, but it can also be caused by viruses, obesity and alcohol use. Over time, these conditions can damage the liver, leading to scarring (cirrhosis). This can lead to liver failure, a life-threatening condition. Men are twice as likely to suffer from cirrhosis of the liver. One of the telltale signs of liver disease is jaundice, when the skin and the eyes appear yellow in color. Other symptoms include abdominal pain and swelling, itchy skin, dark-colored urine, swelling in the legs and ankles, chronic fatigue, nausea, vomiting and loss of appetite.

► **Who To See:** Both a Gastroenterologist and a Hepatologist are medical specialists who treat disorders of the liver.

Lung Cancer

After prostate cancer, lung cancer is the most common cancer in men. Smoking is still by far the leading cause of most lung cancers—up to 90 percent—so quitting smoking is a huge step in preventing the disease. By the time lung cancer is found, it is often at an advanced stage and difficult to treat—so early detection is critical. Symptoms include a new cough that doesn't go away, coughing up blood, shortness of breath, chest pain and hoarseness.

► **Who To See:** A Pulmonologist provides care for people with breathing issues and with diseases of the lungs.

Skin Cancer

Men, especially those with lighter skin, are more likely to get skin cancer than women, and more likely to die from melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer. By 65, men are twice as likely to develop melanoma, and three times more likely by age 80. Examine moles and birthmarks using the ABCDE rule:

Asymmetry: One part of a mole doesn't match the other.

Border: The edges are irregular, ragged or blurred.

Color: The color is not the same all over.

Diameter: The spot is larger than a pencil eraser.

Evolving: The mole is changing in size, shape or color.

► **Who To See:** A Dermatologist is a medical doctor who specializes in treating the skin, hair and nails.

COPD

COPD stands for Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, a group of diseases that cause airflow blockage and trouble breathing. Chronic bronchitis and emphysema are two of the most well-known types of COPD, the third leading cause of death in the United States.

COPD is caused by long-term exposure to irritating gases, such as cigarette smoke. Having COPD increases your risk of heart disease, lung cancer and other medical conditions. Symptoms can include shortness of breath, especially during physical activities, wheezing, chest tightness, a chronic cough and frequent respiratory infections.

► **Who To See:** A Pulmonologist provides care for people with breathing issues and with diseases of the lungs.

Mental Health

Because of the stigma that often surrounds mental health, many men are reluctant to seek help when they need it the most. That can lead to tragic results. Suicide is the eighth leading cause of death among men and even higher among young men. American men are also more than 3.5 times more likely than women to commit suicide. Depression, anxiety and substance abuse are other mental health issues that affect men. If you think you or a loved one might have a mental health issue, we encourage you to reach out to a psychiatrist, psychologist or clinical social worker.

► **Who To See:** A Psychiatrist specializes in mental health issues, including depression, anxiety and substance use disorders.

► **For more, visit HometownHospital.com**

Sources: Sources: Mayo Clinic, webmd, American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, American Diabetes Association, American Lung Association

INSIDE THIS ISSUE



Randy Owen



Brain Health 101



Prostate Cancer Awareness



7 Health Issues for Men

Test Your Brain Health IQ

Answer these six questions true or false and see how smart you are about your brain.

1 Up to 35 percent of the risks to brain health can be eliminated with healthy habits. T F

2 Supplements can boost your memory. T F

3 Socializing with other people is a good cognitive exercise. T F

4 Brain neurons die as you age. T F

5 The brain works better under pressure. T F

6 The brain declines as you get older. T F

ANSWERS:

- 1) **True.** Those habits include regular exercise and a healthy diet.
- 2) **False.** Although there is some evidence that Vitamin E can improve cognition.
- 3) **True.** Being around people helps keep your brain active.
- 4) **False.** In the absence of disease, neural death is minimal.
- 5) **False.** Stress is more likely to impair brain function.
- 6) **It's complicated.** Some cognitive functions do decline with age, but others, such as vocabulary and emotional regulation, can perform better as we grow older.

Sources: Kendall, Northwestern Medicine, Cleveland Clinic, AARP