

Serve Dad a salad Sunday

What do you think Dad would say if you slapped a veggie burger on the grill for him instead of a steak? Served it with a salad instead of baked potatoes? Something along the lines of, "Do I look like a rabbit?"

A lot of the stereotypical "dad things" come out of the woodwork as the summer comes along, more as we head into Father's Day. One of the most common associations dads get this time of year is standing beside a barbecue, grilling up a storm while wearing a just-this-side-of-appropriate-one-liner apron. That or the apron is covered with a bikini body "dad jokes."

Dads are the kings of the grill, the barons of beer, the champions and conquerors of leftovers and usually somewhere down the line, the overlords of overeating. It's easy to picture Mom coming out to the table carrying the dinner rolls and raising an eyebrow at Dad's plate. "Are you really going to eat all that?" she'll ask.

Dads live large, they're grandiose and we love them for it. But this whole "eating like a man" trope we've cultivated and come to expect from our father figures might be doing more harm than good.

Cue Canadian Men's Health Week, running from June 11 until Father's Day "probably not a coincidence."

This week the foundation released the First National Study of Health Behaviours. The study looks at habits that help prevent chronic disease. It found that 72 per cent of Canadian men live unhealthy lifestyles. More than 60 per cent have an unhealthy diet, more than 50 per cent under or over sleep, nearly 60 per cent don't get 150 minutes of moderate to strenuous exercise per week, nearly 40 per cent consume too much alcohol and 20 per cent smoke cigarettes.

I wonder if that surprises you?

Recently, while visiting another couple, I asked my friend if she would want to go and get a pedicure with me. Her husband overheard and smacked my boyfriend on the arm.

"Maybe you and I should go out and get pedicures," he said to him.

We laughed but then he went on, "No really, maybe not pedicures, but women take time to care for themselves all the time. Why don't we ever take time to take care of ourselves?"

What hobbies does your dad have that are strictly for "me time"? My father golfs, my grandfather loves woodworking. While these are things they enjoy, they don't necessarily contribute to wellness.

While I don't agree with the idea, people easily accept a woman eating a salad at a restaurant or taking up yoga as a hobby. You wouldn't bat an eye at that. But if Dad ordered a salad instead of a burger, or didn't bring a six-pack with him to the golf course, you might do a double take.

According to the chair of the men's health foundation, Dr. Larry Goldenberg, 70 [per cent] of men's chronic health conditions are caused by lifestyle and, unlike genetics, can be changed to improve health.

I'm not saying that this Father's Day you should mention to Dad that he should go on a diet. But consider his habits and whether he can change something to improve his health.

Instead of worrying about what to get him, encourage him to take care of himself. The men's health foundation has tips on the small things men can change to live healthier lives on its website, [DontChangeMuch.ca](#).

He might shrug you off, he might tell you he's fine and not to worry. But it's only fair to return the favour "after all, he's been telling

you what to do since you were born.

Happy Father's Day to all our North Hastings father figures.