

## What do your Heart Health Check results mean?

Your results will show you whether you are at low, moderate or high risk of having a heart attack or stroke within the next five years.

### HIGH RISK



If your level of risk is over 15% you have at least a 1 in 7 chance of having a heart attack or stroke in the next five years if left unmanaged.

### MODERATE RISK



If your level of risk is between 10–15% you have at least a 1 in 10 chance of having a heart attack or stroke in the next five years if left unmanaged.

### LOW RISK



If your level of risk is under 10% you have a less than 1 in 10 chance of having a heart attack or stroke in the next five years if left unmanaged.

You will also need to have your level of risk monitored. Discuss with your doctor how often this needs to be done.

For more information, visit  
[heartfoundation.org.au](http://heartfoundation.org.au)

**Terms of use:** This material has been produced by the National Heart Foundation of Australia (Heart Foundation) for the information of health professionals. The Heart Foundation does not accept any liability, including for any loss or damage, resulting from the reliance on the content, or its accuracy, currency or completeness. Please refer to the Heart Foundation website at [www.heartfoundation.org.au](http://www.heartfoundation.org.au) for Terms of Use.

© 2022 National Heart Foundation of Australia ABN 98 008 419 761



What is a  
**HEART  
HEALTH  
CHECK?**



## What is a Heart Health Check?

A Heart Health Check is a 20-minute check-up with your GP to assess your risk of having a heart attack or stroke in the next five years.

### 1. TALK

You will discuss with your GP or nurse:

- Your family health history
- Your medical history
- What you eat
- How active you are
- Whether you smoke or drink alcohol
- Whether you are maintaining a healthy weight

### 2. CHECK

Your GP or nurse will check your:

- Blood pressure
- Cholesterol
- Blood sugar levels

### 3. ASSESS

Your GP will use this information to assess your risk of having a heart attack or stroke in the next five years.

### 4. PLAN

Your GP or nurse will work with you to set a plan to lower your risk of heart attack or stroke. This may involve:

- Ways to make heart-healthy changes to your lifestyle
- Referrals to programs or other health professionals for more support e.g. dietitians
- Blood pressure or cholesterol lowering medication if you are at higher risk



## Why should you get a Heart Health Check?

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in Australia. Many heart attacks and strokes can be prevented through healthy behaviours like eating a heart healthy diet, being active, maintaining a healthy weight and being smoke free. Many people may not know their risk of developing heart disease, especially since you often can't feel risk factors like high blood pressure and cholesterol.

Having a Heart Health Check is an important first step to protecting your heart.



## Who needs a Heart Health Check?

If you are 45 and over and do not already have heart disease, you are eligible for an annual Heart Health Check under Medicare. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples are eligible from 30.



## How much does a Heart Health Check cost?

Heart Health Checks are covered by Medicare and are free at practices that bulk bill this service.



## What can you do now to improve your heart health?

### Enjoy a heart healthy diet

This includes:

- Plenty of vegetables, fruits and wholegrains
- A variety of healthy protein sources especially fish and seafood, legumes (such as beans and lentils), nuts and seeds. Smaller amounts of eggs and lean poultry can also be included in a heart healthy diet. If choosing red meat, make sure the meat is lean and limit to 1-3 times a week
- Unflavoured milk, yoghurt and cheese. People with high blood cholesterol should choose reduced fat varieties.
- Healthy fat choices with nuts, seeds, avocados, olives and their oils for cooking
- Herbs and spices to flavour foods, instead of adding salt

### Maintain a healthy weight

It is important to maintain a healthy body weight because it can help lower your blood pressure and cholesterol and lower your risk of having a heart problem.

The Heart Foundation recommends you aim for a waist measurement of less than 80cm for females or 94cm for males. If you need to lose weight, speak with your GP about how to do it in a healthy way.

### Physical activity

Start with small, realistic goals and work your way up to the recommended 30-60 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity (such as brisk walking) on most days of the week.

### Smoking and alcohol

If you are a smoker, the best thing you can do for your heart is quit smoking. For support to quit smoking talk with your GP or call the Quitline (13 7848 or [quit.org.au](http://quit.org.au)). Drink no more than 10 standard drinks per week and no more than 4 standard drinks on any one day.