Have a Heart Health Check Today

Your doctor can assess how likely you are to have a heart attack or stroke in the next five years. Your doctor will do what is called a Heart Health Check. It is all about looking at the “big picture” for your heart health not just one factor alone.

If you are 45 years or older (35 years or older for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples), and have not had a heart attack or stroke, it is recommended that you have a heart health check.

WHAT IS A HEART HEALTH CHECK?

Your doctor can assess how likely you are to have a heart attack or stroke in the next five years. Your doctor will do what is called a Heart Health Check. It is all about looking at the “big picture” for your heart health not just one factor alone.

Your doctor can help you to improve your overall heart health now and for the future.

1. TALK:
   - You may discuss:
     - What you eat
     - Your lifestyle & exercise
     - Your family health history
     - Your overall health (including kidney disease & diabetes)

2. LEARN:
   - Your doctor will check your:
     - Blood pressure
     - Cholesterol
     - HDL
     - LDL

3. PLAN:
   - Your doctor will help you to make changes to:
     - Balance your diet
     - Your physical activity & lifestyle
     - Your wellbeing

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A HEART HEALTH CHECK?

Once your doctor has your results, ask them for your level of risk.

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.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO IMPROVE YOUR HEART HEALTH?

See your doctor to have a heart health check. Having a healthy lifestyle is important no matter what. You can make positive changes by improving your diet, being active, quitting smoking and reducing your alcohol intake to improve your heart health.

Healthy eating for your heart includes:
- Plenty of vegetables, fruits and wholegrains
- Variety of healthy protein sources including fish and seafood, lean meat and poultry, legumes, nuts and seeds
- Reduced fat dairy such as unflavoured milk, yoghurt & cheese
- 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. If you carry extra weight around your middle (being apple-shaped) you are more at risk than if you are just overweight.

The Heart Foundation recommends you aim for a waist measurement of less than:
- 94cm for males
- 80cm for females

If you need to lose weight, speak with your doctor about how to do it in a healthy way.

Physical activity:
Physical activity also helps manage heart health risk factors. Do at least 30-45 mins of moderate (e.g. brisk walking) or 15-30 mins of vigorous (e.g. running) physical activity on 5 or more days of the week.

Smoking and alcohol:
Smoking is a risk factor for heart disease. For help to stop smoking call Quitline for help (13 QUIT, or https://www.quit.org.au/)

Drink no more than two standard drinks on any day and no more than four on any one occasion.

For heart health information, please contact us 13 11 12 or visit heartfoundation.org.au

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