



WHY IS A HEART HEALTH CHECK IMPORTANT?

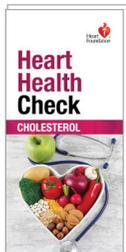
Every 12 minutes an Australian dies from heart, stroke or blood vessel disease. Most heart attacks and strokes are preventable.



Seven in ten adult Australians have at least one risk factor for heart, stroke or blood vessel disease. You may not be aware that you have risk factors as often there are no symptoms.



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.



Look for Heart Foundation information on **blood pressure** and **cholesterol** for more details on these risk factors or call the free Heart Foundation Helpline 13 11 12.

Talk to someone who is specially trained in heart health care to answer your questions

Hours: Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm
Free phone: 13 11 12
www.heartfoundation.org.au

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Heart Health Check





WHAT IS A HEART HEALTH CHECK?

To 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.

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

3. PLAN:

Your doctor will help you to make changes to:



Balance your diet



Your physical activity & lifestyle



Your wellbeing

Having a heart health check can be a good way to take positive steps to protect and improve your health now and for the future.

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.

Depending on your level of risk, your doctor may prescribe medication to lower your cholesterol, or blood pressure, or both.

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

WHAT CAN YOU DO NOW 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**



Reduced fat dairy such as unflavoured milk, yoghurt & cheese



Variety of **healthy protein sources** including fish and seafood, lean meat and poultry, legumes, nuts and seeds



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:



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 (13QUIT, 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.