

Reducing the Risk of Heart Disease

Current Recommendations

Below are the National Heart Foundation (2007) recommended guidelines for prevention and management of heart disease. If your patient does not meet the recommended guidelines in three or more areas identified below they are at risk of developing heart disease. Those who have heart disease can reduce their risk of a further episode by following the recommendations. If the patient has more than one area in which they are not meeting the guidelines don't try to change everything at once, it is best to prioritise what's most important and plan short term achievable goals.

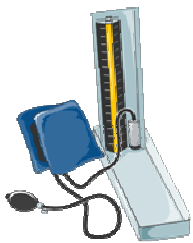


Physical activity

Walk or take regular physical activity at least 30 minutes a day for 5 days a week. Begin at a low intensity level and increase the level over several weeks. Physical activity can be accumulated in 10 minute segments.

Weight

Excessive weight can increase the work the heart needs to do. A healthy waist measurement for men is less than 94cm and for women less than 80cm. It is also recommended that a body mass index (BMI) of 20 -25 is best for your health. To work out your own BMI you divide your weight by kg by your height in metres squared.



Blood pressure

Less than 140/90 is generally recommended however we are all individuals and blood pressure can change depending on the time of day and stress that we are exposed to in our daily activities. Good eating habits, exercise and regular visits to your GP can help control your blood pressure.

Smoking

Complete cessation of smoking is essential for a healthy heart, lungs and body. Stopping is difficult. There are programs that can assist you. So contact your GP or ring a Quit line for help.





Nutrition

Diet is important for general health. It is recommended that you eat five serves of vegetables and two serves of fruit per day. Reduce your salt intake and avoid a diet high in saturated fat.

Stress/Depression

Research has shown that stress impacts badly on our health. Regular relaxation not only improves our health but our outlook on life. Participate in social activities that you enjoy or just take some time out.

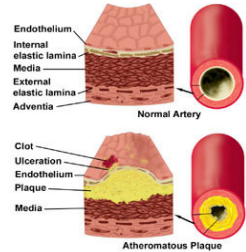


Alcohol

Moderation is the key is recommended that men have no more than 2 standard drinks per day and women no more than 1 standard drink per day with two alcohol free days per week.

Cholesterol

Regular exercise, a diet low in saturated fats and a healthy weight will help you to manage your cholesterol level. A total cholesterol less than 4 is recommended.



Check list

- | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|-----|--------------------------|----|
| Are you physically active ≥ 4 times per week? | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No |
| Have you a healthy waist ≤ 80 cm female ≤ 94 cm male? | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No |
| Is your blood pressure $< 140/90$? | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No |
| Are you a non smoker? | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No |
| Do you eat five serves of vegetables and two serves of fruit per day? | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No |
| Are you able to manage your stress? | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No |
| Do you have alcohol free days in your week? | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No |
| Is your cholesterol < 4 ? | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No |

If you answered NO to three or more of the above questions you are at risk of a heart condition. Consult your GP.

Ultimately you are responsible for your own health. Get active lose weight, have regular visits with your GP. Monitor your blood pressure and cholesterol. Your GP can answer any questions you have and provide you with resources for monitoring your health.