



HEALTH CHECK for men and women aged 45–49 years with at least one risk factor for chronic disease

MBS item 717

This material is a summary only and must be read in conjunction with the Medicare Benefits Schedule Book.

Health check for men and women aged 45–49 years with at least one risk factor for chronic disease.

Why is a health check important for this patient group?

- Nearly 1 in 7 Australians have a recognised chronic disease and the problem is expected to be one of the greatest health challenges of the 21st century¹.
- Risk factors for chronic diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease and some cancers are common in men and women aged 45–49 years.
- The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare estimates that 94% of men and 89% of women in the 45–54 age range have at least one risk factor for cardiovascular disease².
- Most risk factors are modifiable through strategies such as supporting patients to make behavioural changes.

Which risk factors should I be looking for in my patients?

Risk factors for chronic disease include:	Prevalence	Recording of risk factors ⁴
Lifestyle factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smoking • Physical inactivity • Poor nutrition • Alcohol misuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19.5% smoke daily*³ • 1 in 2 do not exercise enough*³ • 10% drink at levels considered to be harmful for long-term health*³ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smoking status and alcohol consumption are recorded in < 50% of patients • Diet is recorded in < 10% of patients
Biomedical factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High blood pressure • High cholesterol • Impaired glucose metabolism • Excess weight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 29% have high blood pressure^{†5} • 1 in 2 have high cholesterol^{††6} • Almost 1 in 4 have diabetes or impaired glucose metabolism^{†7} • 60% are overweight or obese^{†8} 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weight is recorded in < 50% of patients
Family history of a chronic disease	–	–

*In adult Australians. †In adult Australians aged > 25 years. ‡> 5.5 mmol/L.

By offering your patients aged 45–49 years this once-only health check, you can help prevent or delay the onset of chronic disease through early intervention and detection.

Support is available for the implementation of this health check and on-going patient care

Role of the practice nurse

Practice nurses may assist GPs* in performing this health check by:

Identifying eligible patients	Through examination of patient records
Collecting information from patients	Such as measuring height, weight and blood pressure (at the direction of the GP)
Providing patients with information	About recommended interventions (e.g. details of local community resources, support services and referral options)

*Under supervision.

Other resources

- Your local **Division of General Practice** can direct you to resources in your area e.g. gyms and Quit Smoking support groups.
www.agpn.com.au
- The **Lifescrpts Resource Kit** can help identify lifestyle risk factors and implement early intervention strategies to address them.
www.agpn.com.au
- The **National Heart Foundation of Australia** provides resources for patients and clinical practice information for healthcare professionals.
www.heartfoundation.org.au
- The **RACGP** has developed resources to support you in implementing this health check, including:
 - *The Red Book* – Guidelines for preventative activities in general practice.
 - *The Green Book* – Putting prevention into practice: guidelines for the implementation of prevention in the general practice setting.
 - *The SNAP Guide* – Smoking, Nutrition, Alcohol and Physical Activity (SNAP): a population health guide to behavioural risk factors in general practice.
www.racgp.org.au/clinicalresources/45

Item	Fee*	Benefit	Frequency
717	\$102.20	100%	Once only per eligible patient

*Current as of November 2007. This fee will change with CPI increases. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people MBS item 710, *Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Adult Health Check*, should be considered.

References: 1. AGPN, 2007. Available at: www.agpn.com.au/site/index.cfm?display=333. Accessed: 7 October 2007. 2. AIHW: O'Brien K, 2005. Living dangerously: Australians with multiple risk factors for cardiovascular disease. Bulletin No. 24. AIHW Cat. No. AUS 57. Canberra: AIHW. 3. AIHW, 2005. Risk factors. Available at: www.aihw.gov.au/riskfactors/index.cfm. Accessed: 7 October 2007. 4. RACGP, 2007. Available at: www.racgp.org.au/clinicalresources/45/issues. Accessed: 7 October 2007. 5. Briganti EM, Shaw JE, Chadban SJ *et al.* Australian Diabetes, Obesity and Lifestyle Study (AusDiab). Untreated hypertension among Australian adults: the 1999-2000 Australian Diabetes, Obesity and Lifestyle Study (AusDiab). *Med J Aust* 2003; 179: 135-9. 6. AIHW analysis of the 1980, 1983 & 1989 Risk Factor Prevalence Surveys; 1999-2000 Australian Diabetes, Obesity and Lifestyle (AusDiab) study. Available at: www.aihw.gov.au/dataonline/riskfactors/RF-High_blood_cholesterol.xls. Accessed: 7 October 2007. 7. Zimmet P. Diabetes in Australia: An affair of the heart. *Heart Lung Circ* 2003; 12 (Suppl 2): S95-8. 8. Cameron AJ, Welborn TA, Zimmet PZ *et al.* Overweight and obesity in Australia: the 1999-2000 Australian Diabetes, Obesity and Lifestyle Study (AusDiab). *Med J Aust* 2003; 178: 427-32.

Website listings: All listings correct at time of development (27 November 2007)

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