

## CARDIOVASCULAR RISK ASSESSMENT

The Silverstream Health Centre provide cardiovascular (heart and blood vessels) risk assessments for individuals who may be a risk due to previous medical conditions, family history or lifestyle. A cardiovascular risk assessment will help you find out by building a picture of your risk based on factors such as your age, sex, ethnicity, cholesterol levels, smoking history, blood pressure, family history and other health conditions.

**This is calculated by building a risk profile based on the following factors:**

- age and gender
- ethnicity
- cholesterol levels
- smoking history
- blood pressure
- family history
- medical history

Some of these you can change. Some you can't. The key message is you have an important role to play in your health and the choices you make every day do matter. Over time, what we eat, drink, do and how we live increases or decreases our risk of heart disease and stroke.

### **Do I need to have an assessment?**

The age when you are advised to start having heart checks changes, depending on your sex, ethnicity, and other risk factors. If you have worries about your cardiovascular health, speak to your doctor today.

### **Top 10 healthy heart tips**

#### **Give up smoking**

If you're a smoker, quit. It's the single best thing you can do for your heart health. Smoking is one of the main causes of coronary heart disease. A year after giving up, your risk of a heart attack falls to about half that of a smoker.

#### **Get active**

Getting – and staying – active can reduce your risk of developing heart disease. It can also be a great mood booster and stress buster. Do 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity every week. One way to achieve this target is by doing 30 minutes of activity on 5 days a week. Fit it in where you can, such as by cycling to work.

#### **Manage your weight**

Being overweight can increase your risk of heart disease. Stick to a healthy, balanced diet low in fat and sugar, with plenty of fruit and vegetables, combined with regular physical activity.

#### **Eat more fibre**

Eat plenty of fibre to help lower your risk of heart disease – aim for at least 30g a day. Eat fibre from a variety of

sources, such as wholemeal bread, bran, oats and wholegrain cereals, potatoes with their skins on, and plenty of fruit and veg.

### **Cut down on saturated fat and increase the amount of healthy fats you eat**

Eating too many foods that are high in saturated fat can raise the level of cholesterol in your blood. This increases your risk of heart disease. Choose leaner cuts of meat where possible and include healthy fats such as olive oil.

### **Get your 5 a day**

Eat at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables a day. They're a good source of fibre, vitamins and minerals. There are lots of tasty ways to get your 5 A Day, like adding chopped fruit to cereal or including vegetables in your pasta sauces and curries.

### **Cut down on salt**

To maintain healthy blood pressure, avoid using salt at the table and try adding less to your cooking.

Once you get used to the taste of food without added salt, you can cut it out completely. Watch out for high salt levels in ready-made foods. Most of the salt we eat is already in the foods we buy.

### **Eat fish**

Eat fish at least twice a week, including a portion of oily fish. Fish such as pilchards, sardines and salmon are a source of omega-3 fats, which may help protect against heart disease.

### **Drink less alcohol**

Do not forget that alcohol contains calories. Try to keep to the recommended daily alcohol limits to reduce the risk of serious problems with your health, including risks to your heart health.

### **Read the food label**

When shopping, it's a good idea to look at the label on food and drink packaging to see how many calories and how much fat, salt and sugar the product contains. Understanding what's in food and how it fits in with the rest of your diet will help you make healthier choices.