



MEN'S HEART HEALTH

Mens Health Night



Why Heart Health Matters

- Heart disease is the leading cause of death in NZ men
- Often develops silently over years
- Linked to lifestyle and genetic risk factors
- Early detection can prevent heart attacks and strokes
- Small changes can significantly reduce risk

Symptoms to Watch For

- Chest pain, pressure, or tightness (especially with exertion)
- Shortness of breath
- Pain in arm, jaw, neck, or back
- Unusual fatigue
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Palpitations or irregular heartbeat
- Reduced exercise tolerance

SELF CHECK

- Over 40 and had a heart check?
- High blood pressure or cholesterol?
- Overweight or low activity levels?
- Smoker or regular alcohol use?
- Family history of heart disease?
- Get breathless easily or fatigued?
- Any chest discomfort with activity?

What's Normal vs Not?

- Normal: Breathless after intense exercise
- Not normal: Breathless with light activity
- Normal: Occasional fatigue
- Not normal: Persistent or worsening fatigue
- Normal: Heart racing during stress/exercise
- Not normal: Irregular or unexplained palpitations

KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

- Blood Pressure: ideally < 130/80
- Cholesterol (Total): < 4.0 mmol/L (guide)
- LDL (bad cholesterol): as low as possible
- Blood sugar (HbA1c): within normal range
- BMI / waist: keep within healthy range
- Ask your GP for your 5-year heart risk score

New Zealand Snapshot

- Heart disease is the leading cause of death
- Accounts for ~30% of deaths in NZ
- Higher rates in men than women
- Higher risk for Māori and Pacific men
- Many heart attacks occur with no prior warning

RED FLAGS – CALL 111

- Chest pain or pressure lasting >10 minutes
- Pain spreading to arm, jaw, or back
- Shortness of breath
- Sweating, nausea, or dizziness
- Sudden collapse or fainting

Understanding Your Heart Risk

- Your GP can calculate a 5-year heart risk score
- This estimates your chance of heart attack or stroke
- Based on age, blood pressure, cholesterol, smoking, diabetes
- Low risk: lifestyle focus
- Moderate/high risk: may need medication + lifestyle changes
- Knowing your number helps guide prevention

Talking to Your Doctor

- "I've been getting chest tightness when I exercise"
- "I feel more breathless than I used to"
- "I've been feeling unusually tired lately"
- "My heart feels like it's racing or skipping beats"
- "I've got a family history and want a check-up"
- Ask about blood pressure, cholesterol, and heart risk assessment

Prevention & Health Tips

- Stay active (aim for 30 mins most days)
- Eat a balanced, heart-healthy diet
- Reduce salt and processed foods
- Maintain healthy weight
- Stop smoking
- Limit alcohol
- Regular GP checks from age 40

Heart disease is preventable. Early action can save your life.