

## LIFESTYLE RECOMMENDATIONS TO REDUCE CARDIOVASCULAR RISK

**Consider referring all patients to the Heart Foundation Health Information Service (1300 36 27 87).**

Lifestyle factor	Key advice	Resources/referral
Diet	<p>All adults should be supported to follow the current <a href="#">Dietary Guidelines for Australian Adults (2013)</a>.<sup>*2</sup></p> <p>Key recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consume a varied diet rich in vegetables, fruits, wholegrain cereals, lean meat, poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds, legumes and bweans, and reduced-fat dairy products.<sup>3</sup></li> <li>• Limit foods containing saturated and trans fats.<sup>2-4</sup> Replace with healthy, unsaturated fats.<sup>4</sup></li> <li>• Limit foods containing saturated fat, added salt, added sugars and alcohol.<sup>3</sup></li> </ul> <p>* Note: The Australian Dietary Guidelines apply to those who are overweight but not to individuals with chronic health issues, such as diabetes and obesity, or to the frail and elderly. Referral to a qualified practising dietitian is recommended for management of chronic health conditions.<sup>5</sup></p>	<p>Patient resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Heart Foundation, Healthy eating</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Heart Foundation, Nutrition Action Plan</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au">www.eatforhealth.gov.au</a></li> </ul> <p>Consider referral to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dietitian</li> </ul>
Salt	<p>Recommend a reduced-salt diet, especially for patients with elevated blood pressure.<sup>1</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimise intake of processed foods (including bread).<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Consume a daily maximum amount of 5g of salt (2000mg sodium) which is about a teaspoon.<sup>6</sup></li> </ul>	<p>Patient resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Heart Foundation, Shaking the Salt Habit to Lower High Blood Pressure</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Heart Foundation, Blood pressure action plan</a></li> </ul>

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Alcohol	<p>All adults should be advised to follow the <a href="#">current Australian guidelines to reduce health risks from drinking alcohol (revised in 2020)</a>.<sup>2</sup></p> <p>Key recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimise alcohol consumption. Reduced alcohol intake is particularly beneficial for people with obesity, elevated blood pressure, hypertriglyceridaemia or obstructive sleep apnoea.<sup>1</sup></li> <li>Healthy men and women should drink no more than 10 standard drinks a week and no more than 4 standard drinks on any one day.<sup>7</sup></li> </ul>	<p>Patient resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Heart Foundation, Alcohol action plan</a></li> </ul>
Weight loss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weight loss should be recommended for people who are overweight or obese.<sup>2</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BMI values<sup>5</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overweight = BMI 25.0-29.9</li> <li>Obese = BMI ≥30.0</li> </ul> </li> <li>Waist circumference<sup>5</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women: &gt; 80 cm</li> <li>Men: &gt; 94 cm</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>Aim for weight loss of about 1-4 kg per month in the short term, 5-10% of initial body weight in the long term.<sup>5</sup></li> <li>5kg weight loss in overweight patients can reduce BP by 7/3 mmHg.<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>	<p>Patient resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Heart Foundation, Healthy body weight</a></li> </ul> <p>Consider referral to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dietitian</li> </ul>
Physical activity	<p>Advise patients to follow current <a href="#">physical activity and exercise guidelines for all Australians</a>.<sup>2</sup></p>	<p>Patient resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Heart Foundation, Physical activity and your heart health</a></li> </ul>

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Physical activity	<p>Key recommendations:<sup>8</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adults aged 18 to 64 years: be active on most (preferably all) days, to weekly total of 2.5 to 5 hours of moderate activity or 1.25 to 2.5 hours of vigorous activity or an equivalent combination of both.</li> <li>Adults 65 years and over: ≥ 30 minutes of moderate intensity activity on most days or preferably every day of the week.<sup>8</sup></li> </ul>	<p>Consider referral to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exercise physiologist</li> </ul>
Smoking cessation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advise all smokers to stop smoking.<sup>2</sup></li> <li>Offer advice about methods to aid smoking cessation, including counselling services, and if assessed as nicotine dependent, nicotine replacement therapy or other appropriate pharmacotherapy should be used.<sup>2</sup></li> <li>Educate and assist patients to minimise weight gain that can be associated with quitting smoking. Advise them that the CV benefits of quitting smoking are greater than any disadvantages, such as weight gain.<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>	<p>Patient resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Heart Foundation, Smoking and your heart</a></li> <li><a href="#">Heart Foundation, Quit smoking action plan</a></li> </ul> <p>Consider referral to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quitline (12 78 48)</li> </ul>

## References

1. Therapeutic Guidelines. Cardiovascular. Cardiovascular disease risk modification.
2. National Vascular Disease Prevention Alliance. Guidelines for the management of absolute cardiovascular disease risk. 2012.
3. National Health and Medical Research Council (2013) Australian Dietary Guidelines. Canberra: National Health and Medical Research Council.
4. <https://www.heartfoundation.org.au/Heart-health-education/Fats-oils-and-heart-health>
5. Smoking, nutrition, alcohol, physical activity (SNAP): A population health guide to behavioural risk factors in general practice, 2nd edn. Melbourne: The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners 2015.
6. <https://www.heartfoundation.org.au/heart-health-education/salt-and-heart-health>
7. <https://www.health.gov.au/news/australian-alcohol-guidelines-revised>
8. <https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/physical-activity-and-exercise/physical-activity-and-exercise-guidelines-for-all-australians>