

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) risk: diagnosis

CVD risk is the chance of having a heart attack or stroke over the next 10 years

Identify if the patient has established CVD:

- Patient known with any of: previous heart attack, angina or heart failure, previous stroke or TIA or peripheral vascular disease.
- If patient has or has had chest pain, especially on exertion and relieved by rest, screen for ischaemic heart disease → 18.
- If patient has or has had leg pain, especially on walking and relieved by rest, screen for peripheral vascular disease → 38.
- If new sudden onset of asymmetric weakness or numbness of face, arm or leg; difficulty speaking or visual disturbance: consider **stroke** or **TIA** → 76.

Look for CVD risk factors:

- Ask about **smoking**: consider the patient who quit smoking in the past year a smoker for CVD risk assessment.
- Ask about **family history**: a parent or sibling with premature CVD (man < 55 years or woman < 65 years) is a risk factor.
- Calculate **Body Mass Index (BMI)**: $\text{weight (kg)} \div \text{height (m)}^2$. A BMI > 25 is a risk factor.
- Measure **waist circumference** over no/light clothing, at the end of a normal breath out, midway between lowest rib and top of iliac crest. More than 80cm (woman) or 94 cm (man) is a risk factor.
- Look for **hypertension**: check BP ≥ 73.
- Look for **diabetes**: check glucose ≥ 70.
- Check random total **cholesterol**. If unavailable, use cholesterol of 5.2mmol/L to calculate CVD risk.

Calculate the patient's CVD risk:

- Plot patient's risk on charts¹ below using diabetes status, age, sex, systolic BP (SBP), cholesterol and smoking status. Show the patient what his/her risk of heart attack or stroke might be over next 10 years.
- Do not use these charts to decide treatment if patient has established CVD or kidney disease. Treat as if the patient has a CVD risk > 30%.



- Manage the CVD risk in the patient with CVD risk factors or CVD risk ≥ 10% or established CVD → 69.
- Reassess CVD risk after 5 years in the patient with CVD risk < 10% and no CVD risk factors.