

# Heart Health Check MBS item

Since 1 April 2019, two new interim items 699 and 177 became available on the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) to allow General Practitioners (GPs) and other medical practitioners to conduct a Heart Health Check that lasts at least 20 minutes.

## What is a Heart Health Check?

A Heart Health Check is the patient-friendly term for comprehensive absolute cardiovascular disease (CVD) risk assessment and ongoing management.

It principally involves gathering information about a patient's CVD risk factors, calculating and recording their absolute CVD risk using a validated calculator and managing their risk as per guidelines on an ongoing basis.

## Who is eligible for item 699 and how often can it be claimed?

- All adults not already known to have CVD who are aged 45 years and above (30 years and above for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples).
- The items can be claimed once per patient in a 12-month period.

## Why did we need a dedicated MBS item for absolute CVD risk?

- Assessing and managing absolute CVD risk has the potential to prevent twice as many deaths from coronary heart disease when compared with treating individual risk factors <sup>(1)</sup>.
- Underuse of absolute CVD risk calculators contributes to the under-treatment of high-risk patients. Up to 70% of high-risk Australians aged 45-74 years are not receiving blood pressure and lipid lowering therapy <sup>(2)</sup>.
- Existing Health Assessment items (701, 703, 705, 707 & 715) do not facilitate ongoing assessment and management of patients according to their risk of CVD. Limitations include: age restrictions (exclusion of people 50 – 74 years old), in some cases only offering a one-off service and no specific mention of absolute CVD risk calculation.

## What does item 699 involve?

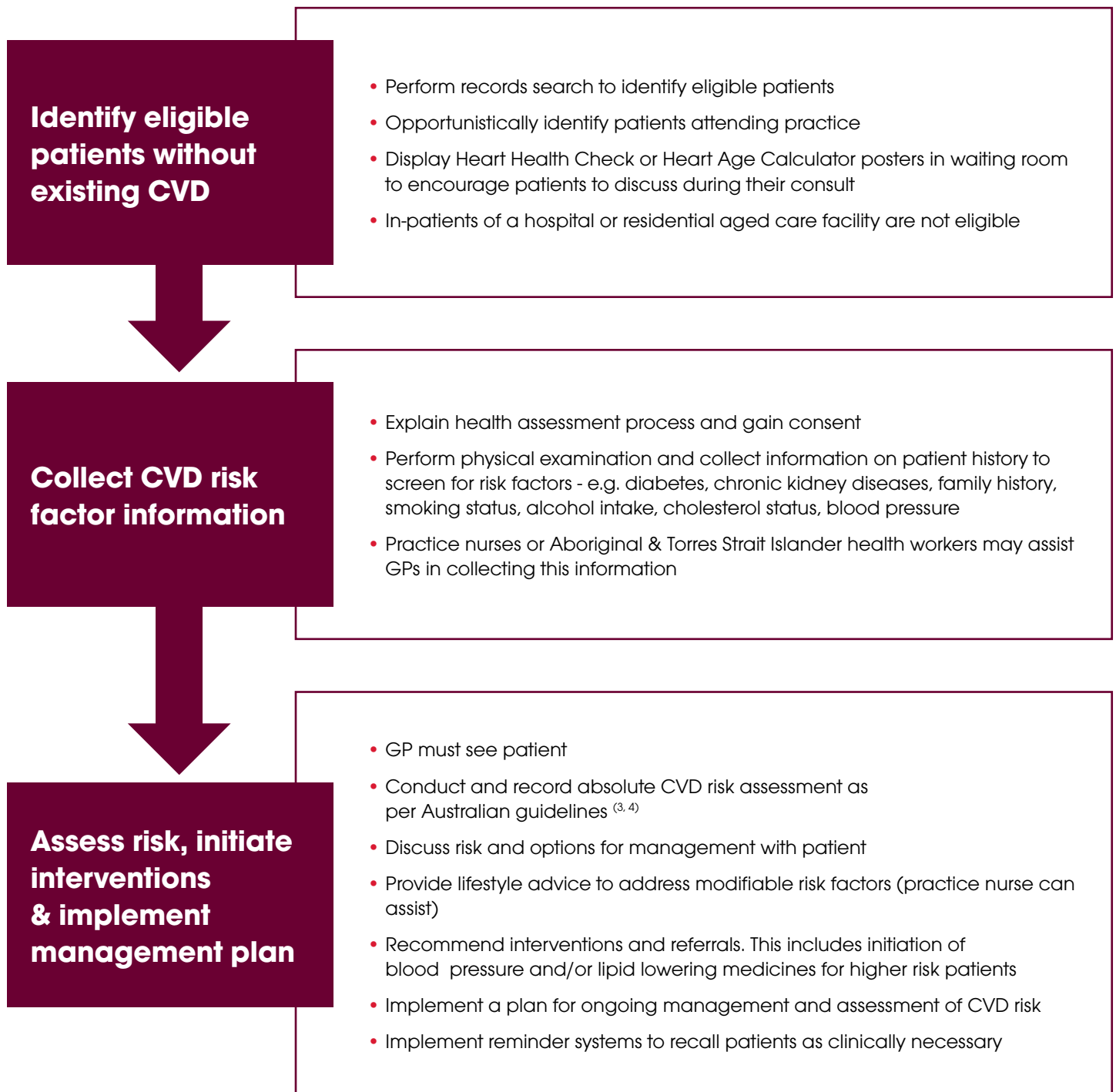
Professional attendance for a heart health assessment by a GP at consulting rooms lasting at least 20 minutes and must include:

- a. collection of relevant information, including taking a patient history that is aimed at identifying CVD risk factors, including diabetes status, alcohol intake, smoking status, cholesterol status and blood glucose
- b. a physical examination, which must include recording of blood pressure
- c. initiating interventions and referrals to address the identified risk factors
- d. implementing a management plan for appropriate treatment of identified risk factors
- e. providing the patient with preventative health care advice and information, including modifiable lifestyle factors

See [www.MBSonline.gov.au](http://www.MBSonline.gov.au) for full details on item description, explanatory notes and schedule fee, including information on Heart Health Check item 177 for use by medical practitioners working in general practice.

**Absolute CVD risk must be calculated and recorded as per the Australian CVD risk calculator available online at [cvdcheck.org.au](http://cvdcheck.org.au) or via calculators embedded in GP clinical software.**

# Suggested approach to implementation of the Heart Health Check MBS item in general practice



For more information visit [heartfoundation.org.au](http://heartfoundation.org.au) or call our Helpline on 13 11 12

## References

1. Manuel, D.G., et al., Revisiting Rose: strategies for reducing coronary heart disease. *BMJ*, 2006, 332(7542): p. 659-662.
2. Banks, E., et al., Absolute risk of cardiovascular disease events, and blood pressure- and lipid-lowering therapy in Australia. *Med J Aust*, 2016, 204(8): p. 320.
3. National Vascular Disease Prevention Alliance, Guidelines for the management of absolute cardiovascular disease risk 2012. NVDPA
4. Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Guidelines for preventive activities in general practice. 2018, RACGP: East Melbourne, Vic.

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