Understanding your NHS Health Check

During your NHS Health Check, you will receive your results and a brief explanation of what these mean for your current and future health.

This blog will provide further information to help you to better understand your NHS Health Check results.

Body Mass Index

Your Body Mass Index, or BMI as it is more commonly known, is a measure that uses your height and weight to identify your weight status, which means whether you are underweight, overweight etc.

Your BMI score will be divided into one of four categories:

- Underweight is a score of less than 18.5
- Normal weight is a score of between 18.5 - 24.9
- Overweight is a score of between 25 – 29.9
- Obese is a score of greater than 29.9

If your BMI is in the overweight or obese category, you are at a greater risk of health conditions including heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes.

Blood Pressure

Blood pressure is measured to assess how hard your heart must work to pump blood around your body. The higher your blood pressure is, the harder your body is having to work. This

means that you are at a higher of developing health conditions including heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and kidney disease.

Your blood pressure reading will be divided into two numbers:

- o 'Systolic' is the first and higher number, which indicates the pressure when your heart is pumping out blood. A healthy systolic blood pressure is between 90 and 140.
- o 'Diastolic' is the second and lower number, which indicates the pressure when your heart is at rest. A healthy diastolic blood pressure is between 60 and 90.

This can go up and down throughout the day. Continuous high blood pressure (greater than 140/90) is known as 'hypertension'. If your reading is high at your NHS Health Check, it is important to follow the guidance from your Health Trainer and book an appointment with your GP to get this checked again.

Blood pressure readings below the healthy range are known as 'hypotension'. They are usually not a health concern unless you are also experiencing symptoms such as dizziness or fainting. If you receive a low reading at your NHS Health Check and experience these symptoms, book an appointment with your GP to follow up.

Cholesterol

Cholesterol is the level of fat circulating in your blood. Your cholesterol results will be broken down into three sections.

- o *Total cholesterol:* This is the total amount of cholesterol in your blood, including both the good and bad. Less than 5 is a healthy result.
- o *HDL:* This is often known as 'good' cholesterol. Greater than 1 is in the healthy range. Higher levels of HDL can help to lower your risk of heart disease and stroke.
- o *Total cholesterol/ HDL ratio:* This is the level of good cholesterol in your blood compared to your total cholesterol level. Less than 5 is in the healthy range. The lower this result is, the better ratio a person has and therefore the lower the risk of a stroke or heart disease.

Qrisk

Your 'Qrisk' score, or cardiovascular risk, is a score to predict your risk of developing a heart attack or stroke over the next 10 years. This will be described as low, moderate or high:

- o Low is less than 10% chance of a heart attack or stroke in the next 10 years
- o Moderate is 10 – 20% chance of a heart attack or stroke in the next 10 years
- o High is greater than 20% chance of a heart attack or stroke in the next 10 years

The most important factors in your risk score are:

- whether or not you smoke
- your cholesterol level

- and your blood pressure

Stopping smoking, reducing your blood pressure or cholesterol, improving your diet, and taking more physical activity are examples of how you can reduce your risk.

Your risk will increase with age, so don't worry if this is slightly higher at your next NHS Health Check even if your other results haven't changed.

Diabetes Risk Score

Your diabetes risk score is completed to assess your risk of developing Type 2 Diabetes and whether a sample is needed to check your blood sugar levels, known as HbA1c.

The risk score is calculated by taking a few basic body measurements and asking a few simple questions about your health and family history. These are entered into a calculator, which provides a diabetes risk score between 0 and 47 divided into four categories:

- Low risk is a score of 0 –6
- Increased risk is a score of 7 – 15
- Moderate risk is a score of 16 – 24
- High risk is a score of 25 – 47

If your risk is moderate or high (16 or higher), you will receive a finger prick blood test to measure your HbA1c. This result provides your average blood sugar levels over the last 2-3 months.

- Normal range is less than 42mmol/mol
- Non-diabetic hyperglycaemia (sometimes referred to as 'prediabetic') is 42-47 mmol/mol
- Diabetic range is greater than 47 mmol/mol

If your HbA1c result is not in the normal range, you will be encouraged to book an appointment with your GP to get your HbA1c checked again. This is necessary as a diagnosis of Type 2 Diabetes can only be made after two samples are tested and found to be within the Diabetic Range.

Audit Score

To assess your current alcohol intake, you will be asked questions to identify your alcohol habits and risk score.

If your score is above 7, it is likely the amount of alcohol you are drinking may be harmful to your health and your Health Trainer will provide you with advice on how to cut back.

If your score is above 20, you may have an alcohol dependence disorder and may require specialist advice. Your Health Trainer will offer you a referral to a local specialist service.