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Preventing Cardio Vascular Disease

Highlands Surgery

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Cardiovascular diseases are diseases of the heart (cardiac muscle) or blood vessels (vasculature). However, in practice, when doctors use the term cardiovascular disease they usually mean diseases of the heart or blood vessels that are caused by atheroma.

**What is atheroma (atherosclerosis)?**

Patches of atheroma are like small fatty lumps that develop within the inside lining of arteries (blood vessels). Atheroma is also known as

atherosclerosis and hardening of the arteries. Patches of atheroma are often called plaques. A patch of atheroma makes an artery narrower. This can reduce the blood flow through the artery. In time, patches of atheroma can become larger and thicker.

# What is cardio vascular disease?

**Lifestyle risk factors that can be prevented and/or changed**

**Lifetime smoking**

roughly doubles your risk of developing heart disease.

**Lack of physical activity**

a sedentary lifestyle Being overweight

**Diet**

Eating healthily helps to control obesity

**Salt**

Adults should eat no more than 5 g of salt a day. This is about a teaspoon of salt.

**Alcohol**

Drinking a small or moderate amount of alcohol probably reduces the risk of developing cardiovascular diseases. That is, 1-2 units per day - which is up to 14 units per week.

**Other treatable or partially treatable risk factors**

**High blood pressure**

You should have your blood pressure checked regularly.

**Cholesterol and other lipids**

In general, the higher the blood cholesterol level, the greater the risk of developing cardiovascular diseases.

**Who should have their cardiovascular health risk assessed?**

Current UK guidelines advise that the following people should be assessed to find their cardiovascular health risk:

All adults aged 40 or more.

Adults of any age who have:

A strong family history of early cardiovascular disease.

A first-degree relative (parent, brother, sister, child) with a serious hereditary lipid disorder. For example, familial hypercholesterolaemia or familial combined hyperlipidaemia.

