

Press release: 1 in 10 men aged 50 have a heart age 10 years older than they are

[Heart Age Test](#) is the only known way of measuring our heart age, which shows how many years we can expect to live healthily without a heart attack or stroke. The higher our heart age, the higher our risk.

Analysis of 1.2 million test results shows the majority of people (64%) with a heart 10 years older than their actual age are male.

Every month, 7,400 people die from heart disease or stroke. A quarter of deaths are of people under 75 and most of these can be prevented.

Public Health England's (PHE) campaign is leading the way in addressing how people think about their heart health, encouraging them to be as familiar with their heart age as they are with their weight or height.

To help people find out their risk and get an immediate idea of their heart health, PHE is encouraging adults to take 3 minutes out of their day to take the [Heart Age Test](#). A new version of the test forms part of PHE's One You campaign, which supports adults in making simple changes towards a longer, happier life. People who take the test will be referred to apps, advice and resources to help them eat and drink better, get active, and quit smoking to improve their heart health.

The campaign runs throughout September in partnership with cardiovascular charities British Heart Foundation, Stroke Association and Blood Pressure UK. For the first time, the test will direct users to their nearest blood pressure station if they do not know theirs, as those with high blood pressure are more at risk of heart disease or stroke.

Associate Professor Jamie Waterall, Lead for Cardiovascular Disease Prevention, PHE, said:

We should all aim for our heart age to be the same as our real age – addressing our risk of heart disease and stroke should not be left until we are older. The Heart Age Test is really important as it gives an immediate idea of heart attack and stroke risk, with no doctor's appointment needed.

While trends have recently shown incidence of cardiovascular disease (including heart attack and stroke) declining in recent years, it is still the main cause of death amongst men and the second highest cause of death in women.

Around half of those taking the test since it launched in February 2015 did

not know their blood pressure numbers. High blood pressure is often symptomless and 5.6 million people in England currently have high blood pressure but do not know it.

Katherine Jenner, Chief Executive Officer of Blood Pressure UK, said:

We're pleased to be teaming up with the Heart Age Test to create an easier way to put people in control of their health. Getting your blood pressure tested in your nearest pharmacy or health centre can be the first important step to prolonging your life.

Having a high heart age increases the risk of serious health issues including dementia, heart attack, stroke, chronic kidney disease and diabetes. Making simple changes, like doing more activity or quitting smoking, can reduce this risk and PHE is urging adults to lower their heart age before it is too late.

Other risk factors include excessive alcohol consumption, poor diet and family history of premature heart disease.

Dr Mike Knapton, medical director at the British Heart Foundation (BHF), said:

It's extremely worrying that so many people don't know their blood pressure or cholesterol levels, as these silent conditions can lead to a deadly heart attack or stroke if untreated.

The Heart Age Test is a quick and easy way to estimate the number of years you will live in good health. If you are concerned by the age of your heart, make an appointment with your GP.

The Heart Age Test is available from the [One You](#) and [BHF](#) websites.

John Deanfield, BHF Professor of Cardiology and Senior Adviser to Public Health England on Cardiovascular Disease Prevention, who led the development of the Heart Age Test, said:

The Heart Age Test takes the results of considerable research, and translates this into messages that we can all apply to our heart health. Understanding personal risk, together with opportunities from intervention, empowers people to take control of their own cardiovascular health. I call it 'Investing in your arteries'. It's about convincing people their heart health really matters, and if they take action early in life and sustain that, they will get a big lifetime benefit on their future risk of heart disease.

The analysis is based on 1.2 million Heart Age Tests taken, of which 33,000 of those were by people aged 50. Out of all 1.2 million people who have taken the Heart Age Test, 167,000 (12%) had a heart age at least 10 years older

than them. To date, the test has been taken 1.3million times.

Around 7,400 people die each month from heart disease or stroke. Source: [NOMIS Mortality statistics – underlying cause, sex and age](#).

5.6 million people in England currently have high blood pressure but do not know it Source: [Hypertension prevalence estimates for local population, PHE 2016](#).

The Heart Age Test is an online assessment for anyone over 30 which allows a person to input basic physical and lifestyle-related information, and provides an immediate estimation of their 'heart age'. The test is designed to prompt people who may look outwardly healthy to think about the health of their inner organs as well. A new version of the tool is launched on the [One You](#) website today (4 September 2017), and will also be available for the first time on mobile phones.

The healthy range for blood pressure is if the first number (systolic number) is between 120 and 90 and the second number (diastolic number) is between 80 and 60. Blood Pressure UK have a guide explaining high, low and normal [blood pressure readings](#).

Around 80% of heart attacks and strokes in people under 75 could be prevented. The main preventable risk factors for heart attack and stroke are:

- smoking
- a high-fat diet
- diabetes
- high cholesterol
- high blood pressure
- being overweight or obese

Public Health England is committed to tackling cardiovascular disease through our joint working with NHS England on the NHS RightCare Cardiovascular Disease Prevention pathway. The [NHS Health Check](#) programme, which helps people detect and manage their risk of heart disease, is a core part of the NHS RightCare Cardiovascular Disease Prevention pathway. Last year 1.3million adults over 40 received a check.

The Heart Age Test is a collaboration between partners including:

- Public Health England
- NHS Choices
- British Heart Foundation
- British Cardiovascular Society
- University College London

The tool builds on communication of risk work undertaken by colleagues at Cambridge University and research of primary care data undertaken by a team at the University of Nottingham. The test incorporates the Heart Age Calculator and guidelines, developed by the multi-collaborative Joint British Societies Consensus Recommendations on the Prevention of Cardiovascular Disease (JBS3).

Blood pressure stations are places where people can get their blood pressure checked, at NHS locations and participating pharmacies.

PHE exists to protect and improve the nation's health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities. It does this through advocacy, partnerships, world-class science, knowledge and intelligence, and the delivery of specialist public health services. PHE is an operationally autonomous executive agency of the Department of Health. www.gov.uk/phe. Follow us on Twitter @PHE_uk