

Public urged to stay vigilant against cardiovascular diseases in support of World Heart Day

The Department of Health (DH) today (September 29) urged members of the public to take positive steps to care for their hearts and prevent cardiovascular diseases. This appeal was made in support of [World Heart Day](#) held on September 29 annually.

Cardiovascular diseases, including heart disease and stroke, are the leading cause of death globally. However, 80 per cent of premature deaths from cardiovascular diseases are preventable by limiting risk factors and practising heart-healthy behaviours. The most important behavioural risk factors of heart disease and stroke are unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, use of tobacco and alcohol. The effects of behavioural risk factors may show up in individuals as overweight and obesity, raised blood pressure, raised blood glucose, and raised blood lipids. These "intermediate risks factors" can be measured in primary care facilities and indicate an increased risk of heart attack, stroke, heart failure and other complications. Identifying those at a higher risk of cardiovascular diseases and ensuring they receive appropriate treatment can prevent premature deaths.

In Hong Kong, cardiovascular diseases are a major cause of mortality and morbidity. In 2023, there were 11 138 registered deaths* attributed to cardiovascular diseases, including 7 258 deaths* due to heart diseases. The Population Health Survey (PHS) 2020-22 adopted the Framingham Risk Model to predict the risk of cardiovascular outcomes including coronary heart diseases, strokes, peripheral artery diseases and heart failure. Among asymptomatic persons aged 40 to 74 living in the community, 18.4 per cent were classified as high risk for cardiovascular issues, with a likelihood of 20 per cent or more over the next 10 years. The proportion of persons classified as high risk was much higher in males (34.0 per cent) than females (4.9 per cent) and increased with age (from 1.1 per cent among persons aged 40 to 44 to 44.5 per cent among persons aged 65 to 74).

More importantly, local surveys revealed that risk factors of cardiovascular diseases were prevalent among the general population. Among persons aged 15 or above, 97.9 per cent reported consuming an average of less than five servings of fruit and vegetables per day, which is the amount recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO), 9.1 per cent were daily conventional cigarette smokers, and 8.7 per cent consumed alcohol regularly (i.e. at least once a week). In addition, the PHS 2020-22 revealed that 24.8 per cent of persons aged 18 or above did not meet the WHO's recommended levels of aerobic physical activity for optimal health. The prevalence of overweight and obesity, raised blood pressure, raised blood glucose and raised total blood cholesterol among persons aged between 15 and 84 was 54.6 per cent, 29.5 per cent, 8.5 per cent and 51.9 per cent, respectively.

To guard against cardiovascular diseases, members of the public are urged to lead a healthy lifestyle that includes eating a balanced diet with at least five daily servings of fruit and vegetables, reducing fat, salt and sugar intake, being physically active, avoiding smoking, and refraining from alcohol consumption.

Apart from healthy living, early identification and proper management of risk factors for cardiovascular diseases, including diabetes mellitus (DM) and hypertension (HT), is another key strategy for lowering the risk of cardiovascular diseases. The Government launched the three-year Chronic Disease Co-Care Pilot Scheme (CDCC Pilot Scheme) on November 13, 2023, to subsidise Hong Kong residents aged 45 or above with no known medical history of DM or HT to undergo DM and HT screening services in the private healthcare sector. As at August 7, 2024, around 40 per cent* of participants who have completed the screening have been diagnosed with prediabetes, DM or HT. They can then receive long-term follow-up care in the community provided by Family Doctors, District Health Centre (DHC)/DHC Express, and other healthcare service providers according to clinical conditions. For more details, members of the public may browse the dedicated website of the CDCC Pilot Scheme (www.primaryhealthcare.gov.hk/cdcc/en).

To help members of the public maintain heart health, the Government will continue organising health promotional campaigns and work in close partnership with community partners to increase public awareness about the importance of healthy living in preventing cardiovascular diseases and to foster a heart-healthy environment.

For more information about healthy living, please visit the [Change4Health website](#) of the DH.

*Provisional figures