



Know your numbers: Time for a check-up



Doing an annual health MOT is a great way to stay on top of your overall health. Keeping track of important metrics like body mass index, blood pressure and cholesterol can help you identify changes that might indicate underlying medical conditions, ensuring you receive any necessary treatment in a timely manner.

Why it's important to know your numbers



Regular check-ups also allow for preventive screenings for things like skin cancer, eye disease, and hearing loss, as well as vaccinations that can help keep you healthy throughout the year. Lastly, annual mental health evaluation allows individuals to recognise the signs and symptoms of mental illnesses earlier and seek treatment before their condition worsens. Taking the time each year to assess your health gives you a better chance at maintaining good physical and mental health.



Important health metrics to check each year include:

Body Mass Index (BMI):

An indicator of overall body weight and composition. Calculated by dividing your weight in kilograms (kg) by the square of your height in meters (m).

Blood Pressure:

Measures the force exerted by your blood against your artery walls. You'll find a blood pressure machines in most GP waiting rooms for easy access. Or, you can buy your own machine and check your numbers at home.

Cholesterol:

A fatty substance found in the body that can increase your risk for heart disease. A blood test will measure total cholesterol as well as the proportions of good (HDL) and less good (LDL) cholesterol. You don't need to check your cholesterol more than once every 5 years, unless it's high.

Blood Sugar Levels:

Measures the level of glucose in the bloodstream. The most useful measure of blood sugar is an HbA1c blood test. If you have symptoms of diabetes your GP will arrange a test.

Vitamin D Levels:

Vitamin D helps regulate the body's calcium levels, which are important for bone health and metabolism. A simple blood test will measure vitamin D concentrations in the body. Around 20% of people are deficient, so you may want to take vitamin D supplements all year round if dark skinned and during autumn and winter if light skinned.

Bone Density Scan:

Evaluates bone strength and structure. This test is performed if you have reason to suspect thin bones. It uses x-rays and ultrasound to measure bone density and evaluate fracture risk.

Thyroid Test:

Screens for an under or overactive thyroid gland. Measures the amount of thyroid hormones, T3 and T4, and thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH).

Skin Cancer Screening:

Evaluates for any changes in the skin that could indicate skin cancer. A visual inspection of the skin for any changes or abnormalities will be conducted. This is known as "mole mapping" and is generally only available privately.

Eye Exam:

Checks for common eye diseases such as glaucoma, cataracts, and macular degeneration.

Hearing Test:

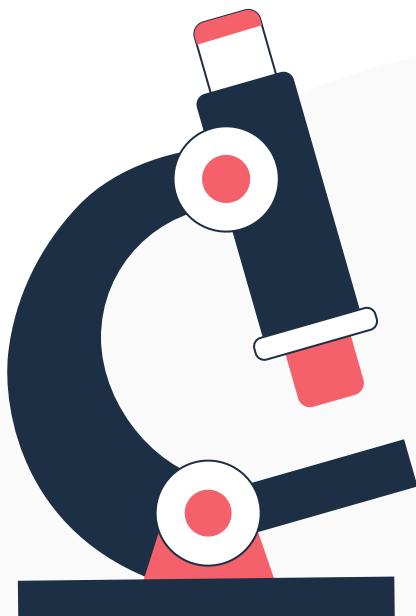
Evaluates hearing ability in both ears. A hearing test involves using headphones and tracking how well you hear certain tones at various frequencies. This can be done on the high street by an audiologist. If you think you have reduced hearing your NHS GP can refer you for this test.

Vaccinations:

Vaccines can help protect against certain illnesses and should be discussed with your doctor when choosing which vaccinations to receive each year. Vaccines are offered at appropriate ages in our life by the NHS, for example a one-off shingles vaccine is offered to 70-year-olds, and a pneumonia vaccine to 65-year-olds.

Mental Health Evaluation:

Assesses symptoms of depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues. Mental health evaluations involve talking with a health care provider about symptoms, thoughts, feelings, behaviour, and experiences related to mental illness.





How to find out what your numbers are

The good news is that it's never been easier or more convenient to find out your numbers; some of these you can do at home, and most healthcare providers offer a variety of tests that give a comprehensive picture of your overall health in one quick appointment. In the UK, you can visit local GP surgeries or health centres for basic medical services such as yearly physicals, vaccinations, and screening tests. You can search for these services using websites such as [NHS Choices](#).

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How to use your numbers to improve your health and wellbeing

The path to better health starts with knowing your numbers. Monitoring these across key areas – from cholesterol levels to body fat percentage – can give you valuable insights into which habits are paying off and which ones need attention. Managing progress means avoiding any health issues that might arise down the line, so don't be afraid to know your numbers and use them as a guide for carving a path to peak performance.

Now that you understand the importance of knowing numbers and what they mean for your overall health, it's time to take charge of your wellbeing. Our experts are here to help you every step of the way. Contact your HealthHero or Validium service today for more support and advice on using your numbers to improve your health and wellbeing.

