

PATIENT NAME _____

DATE _____

Use this checklist to reflect on your heart health before your next appointment. For each question, identify which column — Green, Amber or Red — best describes your current situation. Be honest: there are no right or wrong answers, only useful ones.

HOW TO USE: For each question, circle or shade the column that best describes your situation — then share this with your doctor.

GREEN = On track

AMBER = Worth discussing

RED = Needs attention

BLOOD PRESSURE

QUESTION	■ GREEN	■ AMBER	■ RED
Do you know your blood pressure reading?	Yes, checked in last 12 months	Checked 1-2 years ago	Never checked or over 2 years ago
Is your blood pressure within a healthy range?	Below 120/80 mmHg	120-139 / 80-89 mmHg	140/90 mmHg or above

REFLECT: High blood pressure often has no symptoms. Regular monitoring is essential.

My notes / questions for my doctor:

CHOLESTEROL

QUESTION	■ GREEN	■ AMBER	■ RED
Have you had your cholesterol checked?	Yes, within last 12 months	Checked 1-3 years ago	Never or more than 3 years ago
Is your total cholesterol within a healthy range?	< 5.0 mmol/L / < 193 mg/dL	5.0-6.4 mmol/L / 193-247 mg/dL	>= 6.5 mmol/L / >= 250 mg/dL or unknown

REFLECT: High cholesterol has no symptoms but significantly raises heart disease risk. Ask your doctor about LDL, HDL and triglycerides — not just total cholesterol.

My notes / questions for my doctor:

DIABETES & BLOOD SUGAR

QUESTION	■ GREEN	■ AMBER	■ RED
Have you been tested for diabetes or pre-diabetes?	Yes, normal result in last 2 years	Tested but result uncertain	Never tested or known diabetes uncontrolled
Do you experience symptoms such as excessive thirst, fatigue or frequent urination?	No symptoms	Occasionally	Frequently

REFLECT: Type 2 diabetes doubles your risk of heart disease. Early detection makes a real difference.

My notes / questions for my doctor:

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SMOKING

QUESTION	■ GREEN	■ AMBER	■ RED
Do you currently smoke?	Never smoked or quit > 5 years ago	Ex-smoker, quit < 5 years ago	Currently smoke
Are you exposed to secondhand smoke regularly?	Never or rarely	Occasionally	Regularly

REFLECT: Smoking is the single most preventable cause of heart disease.

My notes / questions for my doctor:

WEIGHT & BODY COMPOSITION

QUESTION	■ GREEN	■ AMBER	■ RED
What is your Body Mass Index (BMI)?	18.5-24.9 (healthy range)	25-29.9 (overweight)	30 or above (obese) or unknown
Do you carry excess weight around your waist?	Waist < 94 cm (M) / < 80 cm (F)	Borderline	Waist >= 102 cm (M) / >= 88 cm (F)

REFLECT: Abdominal fat is a stronger predictor of heart risk than overall weight alone.

My notes / questions for my doctor:

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

QUESTION	■ GREEN	■ AMBER	■ RED
How active are you on most days? (walking, swimming, golf, sport, dancing)	Active most days — varied and consistent	Active some days — still building a habit	Mostly sedentary — limited regular movement
Do you include any structured resistance or strength exercise? (weights, bands, bodyweight)	Yes — at least twice a week	Occasionally — not yet a regular habit	Never, or unsure why it matters

REFLECT: Any activity beats none. Research shows real heart benefit from as little as 4,000-5,000 steps a day — forget the 10,000 myth. Resistance training matters just as much: maintaining muscle mass improves insulin sensitivity, supports healthy weight, and reduces cardiovascular risk.

My notes / questions for my doctor:

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DIET & NUTRITION

QUESTION	■ GREEN	■ AMBER	■ RED
How would you describe your overall diet pattern?	Balanced — whole foods, varied, mostly home-cooked	Mixed — some healthy choices, some processed	Mostly processed, fast food or takeaway
Do you eat enough fibre? (wholegrains, legumes, vegetables, fruit)	Daily — good variety of fibre-rich foods	Sometimes — inconsistent	Rarely — low fibre diet
How often do you consume processed foods, trans fats or foods high in saturated fat?	Rarely or never	1-2 times per week	3 or more times per week

REFLECT: A heart-healthy diet is rich in fibre, balanced in macronutrients, and limits processed foods, trans fats and excess saturated fat.

My notes / questions for my doctor:

ALCOHOL

QUESTION	■ GREEN	■ AMBER	■ RED
How would you describe your weekly alcohol intake?	Minimal or none	Moderate — within your country's guidelines	Regularly exceeding guidelines or binge drinking
Do you have alcohol-free days most weeks?	Yes, most weeks	Sometimes	Rarely or never

REFLECT: Alcohol raises blood pressure and contributes to irregular heart rhythms. Guidelines on safe limits vary by country and individual health circumstances. If you drink regularly, discuss your intake with your doctor.

My notes / questions for my doctor:

STRESS

QUESTION	■ GREEN	■ AMBER	■ RED
How would you rate your overall stress levels?	Low — well managed	Moderate — some impact on daily life	High — significantly affecting wellbeing
Do you have healthy strategies to manage stress?	Yes — exercise, mindfulness, social support	Some strategies, used inconsistently	No strategies or feeling overwhelmed

REFLECT: Chronic stress raises cortisol and blood pressure, increasing heart disease risk over time.

My notes / questions for my doctor:

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SLEEP

QUESTION	■ GREEN	■ AMBER	■ RED
How many hours of sleep do you typically get per night?	7-9 hours — restorative range	6-7 or 9-10 hours — slightly outside ideal	Less than 6 or more than 10 hours regularly
Do you snore loudly, stop breathing during sleep, or wake unrefreshed despite adequate hours?	No — sleep feels restorative	Occasionally — mild snoring or some fatigue	Yes regularly — possible undiagnosed sleep apnoea

REFLECT: Obstructive sleep apnoea is a significant and often undiagnosed cardiac risk factor — it raises blood pressure, strains the heart and increases risk of arrhythmia and stroke. Worth discussing with your doctor.

My notes / questions for my doctor:

MENTAL HEALTH & EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

QUESTION	■ GREEN	■ AMBER	■ RED
How would you describe your overall emotional wellbeing and quality of life?	Generally positive — good balance and resilience	Some periods of low mood, stress or feeling overwhelmed	Persistently struggling — affecting daily life and relationships
Do you notice physical symptoms during periods of stress or low mood? (e.g. palpitations, poor sleep, low energy)	Rarely — mind and body feel balanced	Occasionally — some physical impact	Regularly — physical symptoms are noticeable and disruptive

REFLECT: Emotional wellbeing and heart health are deeply connected. Chronic stress and low mood raise cortisol and blood pressure, disrupt sleep, and drive less healthy behaviours. Some medications used to support mental health can also affect weight, blood sugar and cholesterol — worth discussing openly with your doctor.

My notes / questions for my doctor:

FAMILY HISTORY, LP(A) & MEDICATIONS

QUESTION	■ GREEN	■ AMBER	■ RED
Has a close family member had a heart attack or stroke before age 65?	No known family history	Possible but uncertain	Yes — parent, sibling or grandparent
Have you had your Lp(a) — Lipoprotein(a) — tested?	Yes — result normal (< 75 nmol/L / < 30 mg/dL)	Tested but unsure of result	Never tested — worth discussing with your doctor
Are you currently taking medications for blood pressure, cholesterol or diabetes?	Yes, taking as prescribed	Prescribed but taking inconsistently	Not prescribed but may need assessment

REFLECT: Lp(a) is a largely genetic cholesterol particle that significantly raises heart disease risk and is not reduced by diet or standard statins. It is now routinely tested and treatable — ask your doctor if you have not been checked.

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UNDERSTANDING YOUR RISK FACTORS

Heart disease risk factors fall into two groups. Non-modifiable factors cannot be changed — but knowing them helps your doctor tailor your care. Modifiable factors can all be improved with the right support, and even small changes make a meaningful difference.

MODIFIABLE RISK FACTORS

Blood Pressure

Can be reduced with lifestyle changes and medication

Cholesterol / Lp(a)

Cholesterol responds to diet and statins; Lp(a) may need targeted therapy

Blood Sugar / Diabetes

Diet, exercise and medication can prevent or delay progression

Smoking

Quitting at any age significantly reduces risk within months

Weight

Even modest weight loss improves multiple risk factors simultaneously

Physical Activity

Any increase in movement benefits the heart, metabolism and muscle mass

Diet

Whole foods, fibre and reduced processed food lower inflammation and lipids

Alcohol

Reducing intake lowers blood pressure and reduces arrhythmia risk

Stress

Chronic stress is manageable — lifestyle, therapy and support all help

Sleep / Sleep Apnoea

Treating OSA significantly reduces blood pressure and cardiac events

Mental Health & Wellbeing

Poor wellbeing raises BP and cortisol — worth discussing with your doctor

Medications

Taking prescribed medications consistently is one of the highest-impact actions

NON-MODIFIABLE RISK FACTORS

Age

Risk increases with age — earlier awareness means earlier protection

Sex

Men have earlier risk onset; post-menopausal women catch up rapidly

Family History

A first-degree relative with early heart disease significantly raises your risk

Genetics / Lp(a)

Lp(a) is largely inherited — testing identifies hidden risk

Ethnicity

Some ethnic groups carry higher baseline cardiovascular risk

BRING THIS CHECKLIST TO YOUR NEXT APPOINTMENT

Your doctor can help you prioritise, set goals and arrange any further assessment that may be relevant to you.