



# Health Checks in your 50s

As we get older, our bodies start to change. Metabolism is changing making weight management more difficult and health habits may be showing as problems. It is important to keep up regular health checks and make lifestyle choices to support long term health.

## Recommended Health Checks in your 50s.

What	When	Who	Why
Blood pressure	At least every 2 years	GP	Diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, smoking and obesity can all lead to an increased risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD) (Colagiuri S, 2009; National Heart Foundation of Australia, 2010).
Cholesterol	At least every 2 years	GP	
Weight check: Cardiovascular disease and Diabetes Risk Screening	At least every 2 years	Discuss with your doctor or GP	In 2014 63% of Australians are overweight or obese (AIHW, 2014) and, combined with an increasingly sedentary lifestyle, Australians are at significant risk of developing obesity related problems such as cardiovascular diseases and Type 2 Diabetes. A full examination of your weight and biometrics is important for your long term health (RACGP, 2013).
PAP smear (Women only)	At least every 2 years between ages 18 and 69	GP or gynaecologist	Pap tests will assess for abnormalities in cervical cells that may develop into cancer. The doctor will also check for problems in your ovaries and uterus (RANZCOG, 2014).
Sexually Transmitted Infection Screen	Based on sexual activity, between partners	GP	It is wise to be screened for STIs when changing sexual partners or if you have unusual symptoms (Department of Health, 2015).
Testes (Men only)	Discuss your risk with your GP in your annual check up Self exam monthly	GP Self	Testicular cancer is the second most common cancer in young men and may manifest as a painless lump or swelling, or change in size or shape of the testicle (Cancer Council Australia, 2015).
Dental examinations	6-12 months or as required	Dentist or oral hygienist	Early detection of problems in your teeth and gums enables early treatment and better outcomes. Remember your teeth need to last for the rest of your life (Gussy, et al., 2013) (Spencer, 2003).
Skin Cancer Checks	Annual Regular self exams	GP or dermatologist Self	Two thirds of Australians will be diagnosed with skin cancer by age 70 and early detection leads to better outcomes (Cancer Council Australia, 2015).
Eye exams	Glaucoma screen by age 50	Ophthalmologist or optometrist	Glaucoma is the major cause of irreversible blindness yet only 50% of people with glaucoma in Australia are diagnosed (NHMRC, 2010).
Breast exams (Women only)	Monthly self exams Mammograms every 2 years for women aged 50-75	Self Speak to your GP for a referral	Breast cancer is the most common cancer in Australian women. Breast Screen Australia offers a free mammogram every 2 years to women between 50 and 74, and to women over 40 based on risk (Australian Government, 2015).
Prostate Examination (Men only)	As required; Talk to your GP about your risk in your annual check up	GP	Prostate cancer is very common in men over 50 years old. Screening is recommended if you exhibit any symptoms such as difficulty urinating (pain, burning, increased frequency, blood), unexplained pain in lower back, hips or upper legs, unexplained weight loss (NSW Cancer Council, 2015).
Bone Density	Annually, based on risk. Women from age 45, Men from age 50	GP and Radiology	In Australia, two in three women, and one in three men over the age of 60 will suffer an osteoporotic fracture. Osteoporosis is largely preventable with early detection assisting outcomes. (AIHW, 2011) (Garvan Institute, 2015)
Faecal occult blood test (FOBT)	At least every 2 years	GP or Self through NBCSP	Australia has one of the world's highest rates of bowel cancer with 1 in 23 Australian developing bowel cancer in their lives. The National Bowel Cancer Screening Program (NBCSP) offers free screens for those aged over 50 (Department of Health, 2015).
Hearing Test	As required	Audiologist; referral from GP required	One in 6 Australians is affected by hearing loss impacting communication and social interaction (Access Economics Pty Ltd CRC for Cochlear Implant and Hearing Aid Innovation, 2006).

References  
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