

1 May 2019

Know your risk of heart disease – Heart Week 2019

The Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District (ISLHD) is encouraging residents to understand their risk of heart disease, as part of the Heart Foundation's *Heart Week*, 28 April – 4 May 2019.

ISLHD Head of Cardiac Services, Dr Astin Lee, said it is important for people to take the appropriate steps to reduce their risk of the disease and maintain a healthy heart.

“The best thing you can do to find out about your risk of heart disease is to see your doctor for a heart health check, especially if you are over 45,” he said. “Many people are unaware of their risk of heart disease as there often are no symptoms so it’s vital that people get regular checks.”

“A heart health check can be done as part of your normal check up with your doctor or health practitioner,” Dr Lee said.

ISLHD is also using *Heart Week* to encourage everyone to look after their heart and to reduce the risk of having a heart attack.

“Healthy eating, being physically active and not smoking or quitting if you do, are all key ways to maintain a healthy heart,” Dr Lee said.

“While some risk factors are beyond our control, such as age and family history of heart disease, there are many changes people can make to improve their overall well-being and reduce the risk of having a heart attack.

“Regular physical activity makes you less likely to have a heart attack or develop heart disease. It also helps control other heart disease risk factors like blood pressure, cholesterol, and being overweight,” Dr Lee said.

“Heart Week is an opportunity for the community and healthcare professionals to start a conversation about heart health and the steps we all need to take to reduce our risk of heart disease,” he added.

For more information visit <https://www.heartfoundation.org.au/your-heart/know-your-risks/> or join the conversation via #HeartWeek2019 and #heartfoundation.

In 2018-19 NSW Health has invested \$38 million towards reducing the prevalence of overweight and obesity, and \$13.5 million on tobacco control including public awareness and education campaigns, quit smoking support, compliance and enforcement of smoke-free laws and targeted programs for vulnerable groups.

A range of information and resources are available to support people to eat healthy food options and be more active via the Get Healthy Service where adults can access free telephone coaching to support healthy lifestyles at www.gethealthynsw.com.au.

Editor's note: Dr Lee is available for phone interviews from 1-2 May and photo/film ops on 2 May before 10am.