

6 May 2026

Don't die of a broken heart: Tick the box on a ticker check this Heart Week

[Heart Week 2026](#)

4 to 10 May

Rural and remote Australians are being urged to take positive steps to improve their heart health – and assess their risk of having a heart attack or stroke – during Heart Week 2026, currently underway across Australia.

“Heart disease is one of the leading causes of death in this country – on average, 120 people in Australia die each day from cardiovascular disease, with deaths from heart disease 60% higher in rural and remote areas compared to metropolitan areas* – but the good news is that many heart attacks and strokes can be prevented” **President of the Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA), Dr Sarah Chalmers, said.**



“Maintaining a healthy diet and healthy weight, staying active and not smoking are all important ways in which you can help improve your heart health and lower your risk of developing heart disease.

“Getting a Heart Health Check with your local GP is also crucial.

“Heart health can be a little bit ‘out of sight, out of mind’ – the risk factors for heart disease like high blood pressure and high ‘bad’ cholesterol can slip under your personal health radar, as they often don’t come with any overt symptoms.

“That’s where a [Heart Health Check](#) can help – it only takes 20 minutes, but may very well save your life.

“Your doctor or nurse will check things like your blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar levels, as well as your medical and family history, to determine your heart health and assess your risk of having a heart attack or stroke in the next five years.

“They will then discuss with you ways to help lower your risk, such as dietary changes, an exercise plan, or blood pressure or cholesterol-lowering medication.

“If you are 45 years and over, and don’t already have heart disease, you can see your GP for a Heart Health Check. Some people may be eligible for a check at an earlier age too, such as from 30 years for First Nations people and 35 years for people living with diabetes.

“For many Australians, a simple Heart Health Check could be a life-saver.

“While a Heart Health Check with your GP is the ‘gold standard’, there are other easy online tools you can use to get an indication of your heart health.

“Designed for those aged between 35-75 who do not have heart disease, the Heart Foundation’s online [Heart Age Calculator](#) estimates your individual risk for a heart attack or stroke, using factors like your age, sex and weight (and also your blood pressure and cholesterol levels, if you have access to these results) to determine your heart age.

“If your heart age is higher than your actual age, you could be at greater risk of a heart attack or stroke – and in that case, it is important to see your local GP for further checks and advice.

“The Heart Foundation’s website also has some other great resources to help you on your way to better heart health, including personal walking plans and heart healthy dinner plans.

“Allocate a few minutes this Heart Week to check them out, do the Heart Age Calculator or book a Heart Health Check – your heart (and your family) will thank you for it!”

* [Article from Rural Doctors Foundation website](#) – [Understanding the impact of heart disease](#).

The bulk of the information used in this media release has been sourced from the Heart Foundation of Australia, via the links below:

- [Heart Foundation – general website](#)
- [Heart Foundation – Heart Week 2026](#)
- [Heart Foundation – information on Heart Health Checks](#)
- [Heart Foundation – Heart Age Calculator](#)

[Click here](#) for a downloadable photo of Dr Chalmers.

Available for interview:

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