

# Enhanced invitation methods and uptake of health checks in primary care: randomised controlled trial and cohort study using electronic health records

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## Plain English summary

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## Plain English summary

In England, adults aged 40–74 years are offered health checks to reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes mellitus and kidney disease. Uptake of health checks is < 50% nationally. This research tested new invitation methods to increase the uptake of health checks. We evaluated the effect of a preliminary questionnaire that asked people about their thoughts and feelings about having a health check; we also offered people a £5 retail voucher if they completed the questionnaire. This was a large trial including about 12,000 patients. We found that overall uptake of health checks was low, being about 14% following a standard invitation letter. The research showed that receiving the preliminary questionnaire resulted in only a 1.5% increase in health check uptake and this was not statistically significant. The offer of a retail voucher had no effect on the response to the questionnaire. People who were in good health found it difficult to attend for a health check. More than half of the health checks completed during the study period were performed 'opportunistically', when people attended their general practice for other reasons, and not in response to a standard invitation letter. People who had an opportunistic health check were more likely to have an increased risk of heart disease and stroke and were more often overweight or obese. The research suggests that, rather than focusing on individuals' attitudes towards and motivations for a check, increasing the uptake of health checks requires interventions to make it easier to obtain a health check at a convenient time.

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