

General health checks

The numbers below are averages for patients who either did or did not participate in periodic general health checks over the course of 4 to 22 years.

	1,000 people who did not have general health checks	1,000 people who had general health checks
Benefits		
How many people died from cardiovascular disease?		about 32 in each group
How many people died from cancer?	26	26
How many people died from any cause?	68	68
Harms		
How many people experienced false alarms (overdiagnosis) that led to unnecessary follow-up tests (overtreatment)?		Cases of overdiagnosis (e.g. slightly increased blood pressure or cholesterol levels that do not necessarily pose a health risk or require treatment) and overtreatment have been reported. However, exact numbers are not known.

Short summary: General health checks did not reduce the number of people who died from any cause, including cardiovascular disease or cancer. General health checks can lead to false-positive test results that require unnecessary follow-up tests or treatments, although exact numbers are not known.

Sources: [1] Krogstad et al. Cochrane Database Syst Rev 2019(10):CD009009.