

The Big Blood Pressure Check

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¹Stroke Foundation

The Stroke Foundation of New Zealand is committed to reducing the incidence and burden of stroke. Stroke is our second largest *single* cause of death and its incidence is expected to increase by 40% over the next decade. The current cost of stroke to the country is over \$700 million annually. The incidence of stroke is higher in Māori and Pacific people and onset is 10-15 years earlier than Europeans. High blood pressure is the leading modifiable risk factor for stroke. Around one in five New Zealanders have high blood pressure, and many don't know it.

Over the past 10 years The Stroke Foundation has run a nationwide blood pressure awareness campaign – The Big Blood Pressure Check. The Stroke Foundation engages with several partners including Foodstuffs, St John Ambulance, Wellington Free Ambulance, Rotary New Zealand and Ryman Health to coordinate nationwide “blood pressure testing sites” on the first Saturday of October.

In the last five years 89,200 people have received a free blood pressure check and 9,342 of those tested have been referred to their doctor with a high reading. Around 70% of people tested each year are New Zealand European, 12% Māori and 4% Pacific. Post campaign surveys reveal that around 50% of participants take at least one action to improve their blood pressure.

A wide range of partnerships over the past 10 years has allowed the Stroke Foundation to successfully raise awareness of blood pressure to impact the incidence and burden of stroke in New Zealand.