Positive Cardiometabolic Health

An early intervention framework for adults with intellectual disability: Evidence Guide

This Evidence Guide should be read alongside the *Adult Positive Cardiometabolic Health Framework* (2026; herein referred to as the *Framework*). The *Framework* was developed by 3DN UNSW Sydney, part of the National Centre of Excellence in Intellectual Disability Health, in consultation with a steering committee consisting of clinical and lived experience experts. The Evidence Guide brings together key evidence sources - including clinical and public health guidelines and academic literature - that inform the recommendations aimed at improving cardiometabolic health outcomes for adults with intellectual disability.

People with intellectual disability experience substantially poorer health outcomes than the general population. This includes increased risks of preventable hospitalisations and twice the rate of potentially preventable death compared to the general population (Trollor et al., 2017; Weise et al., 2021). Cardiometabolic conditions are particularly common and a leading contributor to these outcomes (Trollor et al., 2017). More than one fifth of people with intellectual disability meet criteria for metabolic syndrome and are 20% more likely to have diabetes mellitus than the general population (Axmon et al., 2017; Vancampfort et al., 2020).

The Adult Framework has been developed to support health professionals working with adults with intellectual disability to provide high-quality, practical care. It emphasises person-centred care, fostering shared decision-making between individuals with intellectual disability, their families and support persons, and healthcare providers, through a framework for structured and individualised care. The framework aligns with the *National Roadmap for Improving the Health of People with Intellectual Disability* (Australian Government, 2021).

The Framework was first developed in 2016 and has been reviewed and updated by 3DN UNSW Sydney in 2026. It was adapted from MindGardens (2023) "*Positive Cardiometabolic Health Resource: An early intervention framework for people of psychotropic medication*". This Evidence Guide relates specifically to the updated 2026 version. An equivalent *Adolescent Framework* has also been reviewed and updated.

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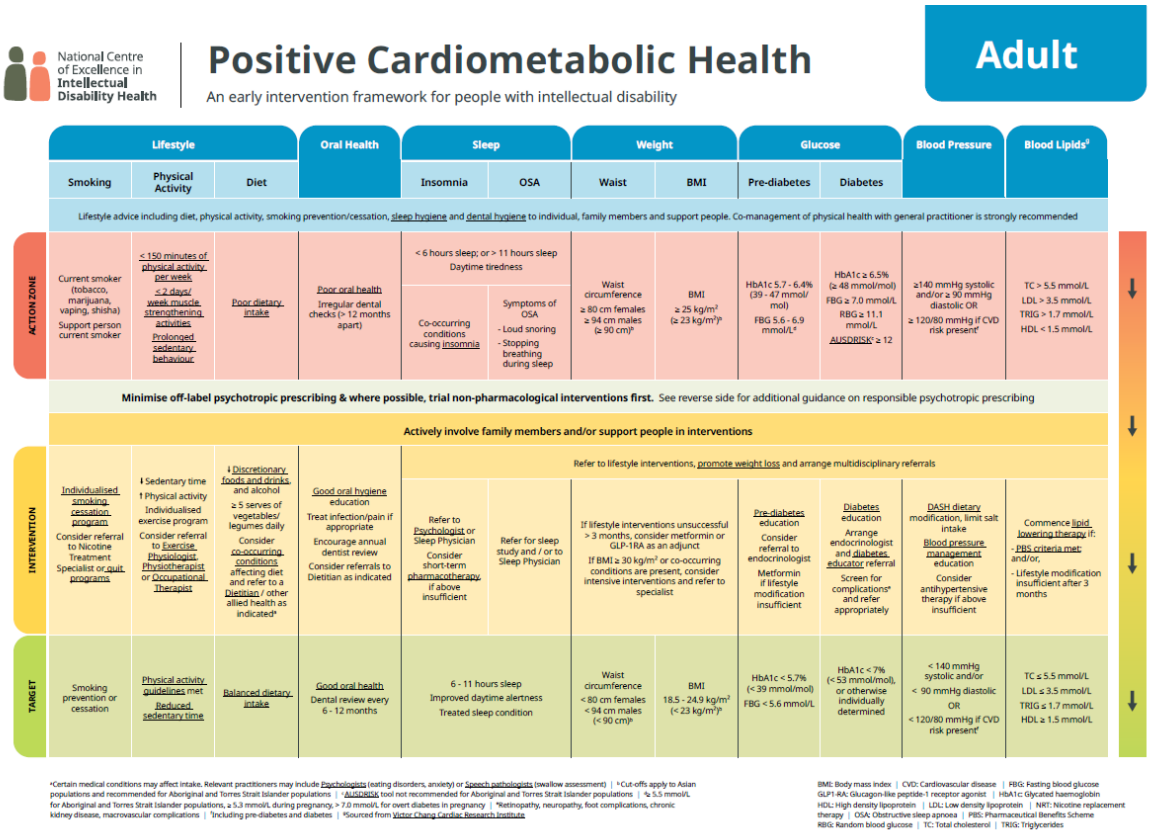
The Evidence in the Framework

The framework details cardiometabolic risk factors and associated interventions, based on clinical guidelines and recommendations. Links to key evidence used throughout this framework are listed by risk factor below:



Lifestyle

- Smoking
  - "*Smoking, Nutrition, Alcohol, Physical activity (SNAP) Guidelines*", Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, 2015
  - "*Supporting smoking and vaping cessation: A guide for health professionals*", Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, 2024.
- Physical Activity
  - "*24-hour movement guidelines for all Australians: Recommendations for People with disability*", Australian Government, 2026
- Diet
  - "*Eat for Health: Recommended number of serves for adults*", Australian Government

- "*Eat for Health: Discretionary Food and drink choices*", Australian Government
- "*Nutrition Issues in Intellectual Disability*", Dietitians Australia, 2020

Oral Health

- "*Oral Health and Intellectual Disability*", Australian Dental Association, 2019
- "*Heart disease and oral health fact sheet*", New South Wales Health, 2025
- "*Practice Alert: Oral Health*", National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and safeguards Commission, 2023

Sleep

- "*Insomnia Management*", Australian Journal of General Practice, 2019
- "*Sleep Hygiene: Good Sleep Habits*", Sleep Health Foundation, 2024

Weight

- "*Australian Obesity Management Algorithm*", Australian Diabetes Society, 2022

Glucose

- "*Fact Sheet: Understanding pre-diabetes*", National Diabetes Services Scheme, 2022
- "*Fact Sheet: Understanding type 2 diabetes*", National Diabetes Services Scheme, 2025
- "*The Australian Type 2 Diabetes Risk Assessment Tool (AUSDRISK)*", Australian Government, 2022
- "*Australian Type 2 Diabetes Glycaemic Management Algorithm*", National Diabetes Services Scheme, 2024

Blood Pressure

- "*DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet to prevent and control hypertension*" Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, 2015
- "*Blood Pressure and your heart*", Heart Foundation
- "*Guidelines for the diagnosis and management of hypertension in adults*", Heart Foundation, 2016

Blood Lipids

- "*Practical guide to pharmacological lipid management*", Heart Foundation, 2023
- "*PBD-Eligibility Criteria for Cholesterol Lowering Medicines*", Australian Government, 2006

- "*Guidelines on the management of blood cholesterol*", American Heart Association, 2018

Additional references:

- Sex specific risk factors
  - "*Australian Pregnancy Care Guidelines*", Australian Living Evidence Collaboration, 2026
  - "*Cardiovascular risk and menopause*", Australasian Menopause Society, 2023
  - "*Management of obesity, gestational diabetes, and hypertension in pregnancy: College statements*", The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, 2021

- Psychotropic medicines
  - "*Psychotropics medicines in cognitive disability or impairment Clinical Care Standard*", Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, 2024
  - "*Therapeutic Guidelines: Consent, capacity and decision making for people with Developmental disability*", Therapeutic Guidelines, 2021
  - "*Therapeutic Guidelines: Challenging behaviours in a person with developmental disability*", Therapeutic Guidelines, 2021

- Other Topics
  - "*Ensuring Consent*", Council for Intellectual Disability
  - "*National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan*", Australian Government, 2021
  - "*Comprehensive Health Assessment Program (CHAP)*", Australian Government, 2024
  - "*Cultural responsiveness in general practice*", Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, 2023
  - "*National Roadmap for Improving the Health of People with Intellectual Disability*", Australian Government, 2021