

People with an intellectual disability (ID) experience poorer health than the general population. This is partly because people with an ID are more likely to develop cardiovascular disease, diabetes and related illnesses. Together, these conditions are known as cardiometabolic diseases.

There are several tools that help health professionals to monitor health in the general population. We worked with the makers of one of these tools, and made it specific to the needs of people with an ID. Over 30 experts in ID or cardiometabolic health helped us change the tool.

The new framework is called *Positive Cardiometabolic Health for People with an Intellectual Disability: an early intervention framework*. It supports health professionals to monitor cardiometabolic health. It also encourages health professionals to prepare for the extra needs of people with an ID including:

- Communication needs
- Fear of blood tests
- Social and economic issues that get in the way of healthcare
- The effects of different genes

People with an ID are prescribed a lot of medications for mental health, which can be bad for heart health. The framework reminds doctors to be careful with mental health medications and only prescribe them if needed.

The framework provides treatment strategies for use when a person with an ID is found to be at risk of cardiometabolic illness. Strategies focus on changes to diet and lifestyle, and include referrals to allied health professionals.

We also developed a toolkit of resources about cardiometabolic health. Separate resources are available for health professionals, carers and people with an ID.

This is a plain English version of the published journal article:

Julian Trollor, Carmela Salomon, Jackie Curtis, Andrew Watkins, Simon Rosenbaum, Katherine Samaras & Philip B. Ward (2016). Positive cardiometabolic health for adults with intellectual disability: an early intervention framework. *Australian Journal of Primary Health* 22(4), 288-293.