Health risk factors are factors that increase the likelihood of developing a disease or health disorder.  
- Some health risk factors are not modifiable, such as one’s age, sex and genetic make-up.  
- Modifiable health risk factors are those over which individuals have some influence and which can be grouped into health-related behaviours (for example, diet, exercise, smoking and alcohol consumption) and biomedical factors (for example, raised blood pressure value and abnormal cholesterol level).

### Key health risk factors

- Overweight & obesity
- Physical inactivity
- Poor diet
- Smoking & excessive alcohol consumption

#### What are the trends?

**Overweight & obesity**
- Between 1995 & 2007–08, measurements of body mass index and waist circumference among adults rose.
- Largest rise of overweight/obesity was among females aged 12 to 44 years.

**Physical inactivity**
- Between 1989–90 & 2007–08, the proportion of adults who were physically inactive remained high at over 50% for all age groups.
- Largest rise of physical inactivity was seen in 15–24 year olds.

**Poor diet**
- The vast majority of adults and people aged 12 to 17 years did not eat enough vegetables.

**Smoking**
- Rates of smoking have fallen substantially among young people, particularly teenagers, in the last decade.

**Alcohol**
- Increases were seen in the proportion of people aged 18 years or over who drank at long-term risky levels between 1995 and 2007–08 in all age groups, apart from men aged 75 years or over.

#### Summary of changes over time in risk factors by broad age groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>12–17</th>
<th>18–44</th>
<th>45–64</th>
<th>85+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overweight</td>
<td>![up]</td>
<td>![up]</td>
<td>![up]</td>
<td>![up]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physically inactive</td>
<td>![up]</td>
<td>![up]</td>
<td>![~]</td>
<td>![#]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient vegetables</td>
<td>![up]</td>
<td>![up]</td>
<td>![~]</td>
<td>![#]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoking</td>
<td>![down]</td>
<td>![down]</td>
<td>![up]</td>
<td>![up]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excessive alcohol</td>
<td>![down]</td>
<td>![up]</td>
<td>![up]</td>
<td>![#]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![#] most of the age/sex results within this broad age group are increasing

~ no change