



ASTF health checkups at Kirchberg Hospital

The ASTF has been offering health checkups to employees of the financial sector since 2003. To date, 1994 individuals have benefited from an updated review on their health status. The results speak for themselves.

What do these health checkups involve?

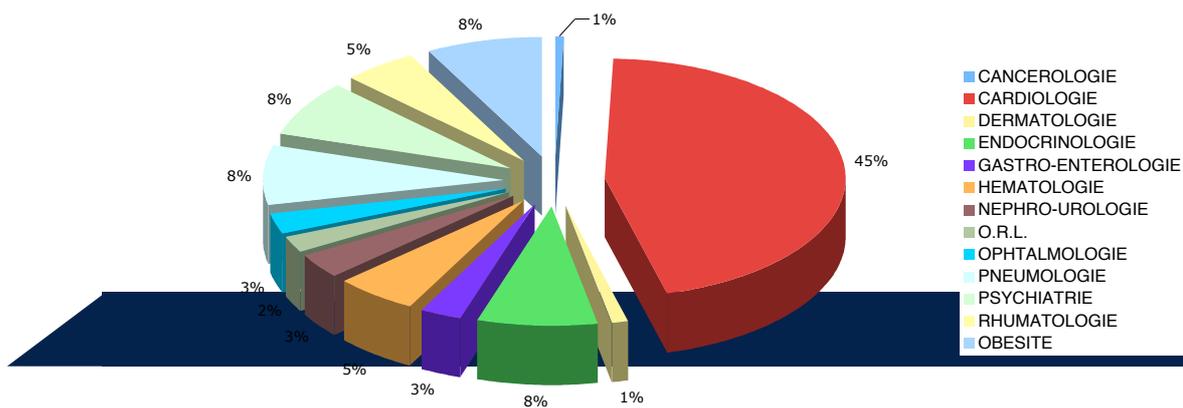
A health checkup generally includes:

- a blood test to determine blood count (red and white blood cells, etc.), blood lipid analysis (blood fat content) including cholesterol levels, renal function, hepatic (liver) function, glycaemia (blood sugar levels) and thyroid gland function. For men in their forties and above, a PSA (prostate specific antigen) screening test is included;
- a urine test;
- a faecal occult blood test (colon cancer screening);
- calculation of BMI (body mass index) and assessment of body fat and hydration (Bodycheck®);
- an audiometric (hearing) test;
- a spirometry test, i.e. assessment of pulmonary function and capacity (screening for early-stage chronic bronchitis, emphysema, asthma, fibrosis);
- testing of visual acuity, colour vision and visual field;
- intra-ocular pressure testing (screening for glaucoma);
- basic electrocardiogram;
- an osteodensitometry test (osteoporosis screening) for women in their forties and above;
- anamnesis (medical history) and complete clinical exam (blood pressure, ear, nose and throat exam, cardiovascular exam);
- discussion of results with doctor, health recommendations, documentation on specific problems diagnosed;
- if necessary, specialist referral;
- complete medical report issued to employee with copy of results for attending doctor.

The above is the basic health checkup that we would recommend as a strict minimum.

From a practical point of view, the patient is requested to attend our rooms in the morning on an empty stomach. A blood sample will be drawn, followed by breakfast. After breakfast, the above tests will be carried out followed by a doctor's consultation.

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The entire appointment will last approximately two hours.

Checkups are recommended every three years, depending on the age of the individual.

Upon request, we can also organise the following complementary specialist checkups, such as an exercise stress test, Doppler echocardiogram and/or carotid Doppler sonography, colonoscopy, gastroscopy, abdominal sonography.

Results

Since its launch, the health checkup service has already enabled some conclusions to be drawn.

From a sample of 459 patients, 293 health problems were able to be detected. While one percent of cases involved cancer detection, most of the problems detected implied cardiovascular risk factors: 45% of problems detected were heart-related and 8% involved endocrinology issues, in particular diabetes and thyroid gland disorders, both risk factors for cardiovascular disease. In addition, 8% of cases involved excess body weight (taking into account only those cases in which patients were unaware of their excess body weight!), which also has a negative bearing on the cardiovascular system.

Upon analysing these cardiovascular risk factors a bit more closely, the distribution as shown on the right can be seen.

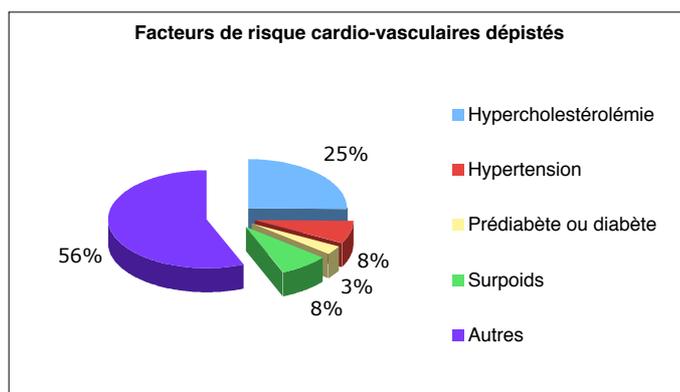
All these pathologies can be improved if not healed by a healthier lifestyle or suitable treatment. Morbidity and mortality rates caused by cardiovascular disease can thus be considerably reduced for those concerned.

In conclusion

At a time when obesity and its resulting health issues such as arterial hypertension, hypercholesterolaemia and diabetes have been declared public enemy number one, it is vital that action be taken and everyone be made aware of their own state of health and the fact that they can have an active and positive influence on it.

In view of a constantly ageing population, we owe it to ourselves to age in the best possible conditions in order to prevent our social system from collapsing.

During the health checkup, we dedicate a significant amount of the consultation to explaining preventative lifestyle and dietary measures as well as the motivation underlying physical exercise. A large number of patients thus improve their parameters without having to resort to taking medication.



For more information, please do not hesitate to contact us:

ASTF Prevention

Tel: 24 68 41 20

Tick bites



Advice and information

Ticks are tiny spider-like creatures, which live in woodland and high grassy areas. To molt from the nymph (larval) stage to the adult stage and during the gestation period of the adult females, ticks require a blood meal. To this effect, they feed on a host, which can be an animal or a human, by attaching themselves to the latter via their suction organ (hypostome or rostrum). They can remain anchored to the skin for several days in this way. Once they become engorged with blood, they simply fall to the ground.

A tick bite is painless and can often occur unnoticed, especially when caused by a nymph tick, which is no bigger than the head of a needle. It can transmit two significantly different human diseases:

- tick-borne meningoencephalitis
- Lyme disease or Borreliosis

Tick-borne meningoencephalitis

This virus is transmitted by the bite of a tick through the content of its salivary glands. This virus does not exist throughout all of Europe. It is particularly widespread in Bavaria, the Black Forest, Austria and Eastern Europe. So far, not a single case has been reported in the Benelux countries, Great Britain, Portugal or Spain.

The virus triggers a meningoencephalitis in 10% of infected patients. Sequelae are observed in 10 to 30% of infected patients and the disease can be fatal in 1% of cases. There is no specific therapy for tick-borne meningoencephalitis. The only protection consists in administering a vaccine to those at risk. Three vaccinations are required at 9 to 12-month intervals. Protection is ensured for five years. Vaccination is recommended during the win-

ter to ensure active protection over the summer. If travelling to an endemic region, the vaccine can be administered in three weeks, but protection will last only 12 to 18 months.

Lyme disease or Borreliosis

Borreliosis is a bacterial disease transmitted by a tick at the end of its meal through stomach regurgitation. To prevent transmission of the disease, it is therefore vital to remove the tick as soon as possible since the risk of infection increases with the length of the bite. One tick in five is a carrier of Lyme disease. The disease develops in three stages:

Stage 1

Following an incubation of a few days to a few weeks, in almost all cases flu-like symptoms are witnessed (fever, muscle aches, sore throat) and in 50% of cases, a red skin lesion appears with a paler centre (featuring a type of aureole around the injection site).



Stage 2

Stage 2 occurs a few weeks or months after the bite and is characterised by neurological signs such as neuralgias, paralysis and a swelling of the lymph nodes.

Stage 3

Stage 3 occurs several months or even years later! The patient then suffers from arthritis, skin rashes, a decline in general health and more rarely paralysis and motor coordination troubles.

This is an insidious disease that can take on very different forms and is often misdiagnosed. It can be treated at any of the above stages with antibiotics, but the later the diagnosis, the more intense and prolonged the treatment.

Its prevention can be ensured through protection against tick bites:

- wear long-sleeved clothing, trousers and closed shoes when going on forest outings;

- use insect-repellent cream;

- carefully examine your body when returning from your outing, in particular warm humid areas, such as your armpits and groin area. Don't forget to check your scalp!

- remove any ticks as quickly as possible.

There is a vaccine available in the US against Borreliosis but it acts against only one type of bacterium, the only one that lives in the United States! In the EU, however, there are three types of bacteria that can cause the infection. A vaccine designed to provide protection against all three types of bacteria is currently undergoing clinical trials.

What to do in the event of a bite?



1) Remove the tick as soon as possible.

2) Do not use any disinfectant before the tick has been removed. The product can make the tick regurgitate, thereby increasing the risk of infection.

3) Remove any nymphs with tweezers. Place the tweezers as closely as possible to the skin and pull at a straight angle.

4) Remove any adult ticks by performing a semi-rotation with a tick removal hook.

5) Never pinch the body of the tick, otherwise blood may flow back to the skin.

6) Disinfect bite area once removed.

7) Make a note of the date of the bite in a diary and monitor skin.

8) In the event of any redness appearing, consult a doctor.

Should the head of the tick remain attached to the skin, this is of no serious concern. Simply disinfect and it will drop off a few days later.