

COLES PARTNERS WITH HEART FOUNDATION TO PROMOTE HEART HEALTH CHECKS

All Coles Supermarkets to have defibrillators by 1 July

Coles is partnering with the Heart Foundation to encourage Australians to look after their hearts, launching a massive awareness drive to Coles' 21 million weekly customers.

The partnership comes as Coles rolls out Automated External Defibrillators (AED) to all Coles supermarkets across Australia over the next month, to provide rapid aid to customers or team members having a sudden cardiac arrest.

Heart disease is Australia's biggest killer, with more than 18,000 people losing their lives each year – equivalent to two deaths every hour.

Victorian cardiac arrest survivor, Grant Fraser (57) said; "The heart attack that nearly killed me was totally unforeseen. I have always been relatively fit with a good diet, so it was completely surreal when in October 2017 I fell victim to a coronary incident.

"Even after I knew I was having a heart attack I did not think that my heart would effectively stop for three minutes. I was dead. If I had not had access to the defibrillator in the Emergency Department of the Ballarat Hospital I would not have recovered. I therefore whole heartedly endorse Coles' initiative of introducing defibrillators to their stores."

Coles is supporting the Heart Foundation in its mission to encourage more Australians to have a Health Heart Check with their doctor.

Over coming months, Coles will promote the Heart Foundation's message in store, via social media channels and by reaching out directly to millions of flybuys members.

The Heart Foundation's Group CEO, Adjunct Professor John Kelly, congratulated Coles for taking an active role in protecting the heart health of Australians.

"Coles will make AEDs more accessible so they can be deployed quickly in an emergency, which will save lives," Professor Kelly said. "AEDs are critical to saving lives as every second and minute counts when a person is having a cardiac arrest.

"We also thank Coles for helping the Heart Foundation to extend our heart health message to Coles shoppers. We are encouraging Australians to take advantage of a new Medicare benefit and see their GP for a Heart Health Check. This could prevent 76,500 heart events over the next five years, including heart attacks, strokes and deaths.

"Coles and the Heart Foundation are supporting each other's important initiative to reach millions of Australians about heart disease."



Coles Director of Safety David Brewster said the safety of customers and team members is a top priority at Coles, with a minimum of five team members at every supermarket trained and accredited in first aid by St John Ambulance Australia so they can help in medical emergencies, including performing cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) in the event of cardiac arrest.

"By having defibrillators available for our customers and team members, we will be even more able to provide help that has been shown to increase the chances of survival for people who suffer a sudden cardiac arrest," he said.

"All our first aid team members will be trained in the use of the AED, and we have chosen an easy-to-use device that includes audio and visual instructions so that just about anyone can use it in the case of an emergency."

AEDs have already been installed at 37 Coles supermarkets and a national roll-out to more than 820 Coles supermarkets across Australia is set to be completed by July 1.

St John Ambulance Australia CEO Gordon Botwright congratulated Coles for providing all stores with a defibrillator, which will have a positive impact in local communities across the country.

"Sudden cardiac arrest is one of the leading causes of death in Australia, but if victims receive defibrillation within the first few minutes their chances of survival are significantly strengthened from just five per cent without defibrillation to more than 70 per cent," he said.

"St John's goal is for 50 per cent of sudden cardiac arrests to receive defibrillation by 2023 – currently this figure is just one per cent in Victoria – so we applaud Coles in assisting this mission by placing defibrillators in all of its stores."

The defibrillators will be located near the customer service desk and will be accessible for neighbouring retailers and small businesses to use in the event of an emergency.

The Heart Foundation's General Manager of Heart Health Bill Stavreski said Heart Health checks were the best way to understand and manage the risk of heart disease, as many risk factors are silent or have no visible symptoms.

"The Heart Foundation recommends that people aged 45 to 74 years have a heart health check at least every two years, sooner if recommended by your doctor – for Indigenous Australians the checks should start at 30," Mr Stavreski said.

Heart Health Checks are now covered by Medicare for eligible Australians.

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