

## **'Before Damage is Done' campaign encourages blood pressure check (<https://www.activelink.ie/node/115530>)**



Marty Morrissey has urged people to have the 'silent killer' of blood pressure checked having lost his father and grandfather to heart attacks.

The legendary GAA commentator said their deaths fuelled his acute awareness of cardiac health as he backed the Irish Heart Foundation's 'Before Damage is Done' campaign.

"Sometimes we're a bit careless about it, 'ah, we'll be grand'," said the RTÉ Gaelic Games correspondent.

"But we do need to be far more aware of our own health. You are the best judge of anything that is wrong with you, so don't dismiss it – because your body is telling you something, and sometimes we ignore it or don't want to know about it.

"In the GAA world, we have black cards, red cards and yellow cards. If you get the yellow card, you take the warning."

"Once you're over 50 you need to be getting everything checked."

Mr Morrissey, from Quilty, Co. Clare whose dad Martin died of a sudden heart attack in 2004, was speaking as new research by the national stroke and heart charity showed a drop in understanding of the risk of stroke and heart disease from untreated high blood pressure.

Last month's online survey of 1,000 people, conducted by Core Research, reveals just 49% had their blood pressure checked in the last six months, compared to 57% in November 2023.

Only 67% believe untreated blood pressure creates a high risk of stroke (down from 78% in 2023), while 64% believe there is a high risk of heart disease (down from 72% in 2023).

In addition, the data shows public knowledge has fallen in relation to how untreated blood pressure can lead to dementia or kidney disease, as well as damaging your heart and other organs.

Worryingly, 29% of people believe the signs of high blood pressure are obvious, yet high blood pressure is a silent killer.

"The research shows an unfortunate fall off in the level of understanding of the serious consequences of hypertension or high blood pressure," said Janis Morrissey, Director of Health Promotion, Information and Training with the Irish Heart Foundation.

"High blood pressure is among the leading risk factors for heart disease or stroke and premature death worldwide."

"A quarter of people having strokes are under age 65 and are still of working age, so it can have devastating consequences not only for someone's health, but also on their quality of life and financial independence if they are forced to stop working."

Blood pressure checks are a vital tool in measuring how effectively the heart pumps blood around the body.

Dr David McConaghy, ICGP/HSE Integrated Care Lead for Prevention said: "The Irish College of General Practitioners supports this campaign to raise awareness about blood pressure and encourages people to attend their GP practice for a cardiovascular review."

Susan O'Dwyer, Head of Governance and Pharmacy Services with the Irish Pharmacy Union said "We support this important campaign to encourage people to get their blood pressure checked with the aim of detecting high blood pressure before damage is done. Pharmacies nationwide offer blood pressure testing and many also offer 24-hour blood pressure

monitoring. Speak to your local pharmacist to learn more.”

For morning information, visit [the Before Damage is Done page](https://irishheart.ie/how-to-keep-your-heart-healthy/blood-pressure/). (<https://irishheart.ie/how-to-keep-your-heart-healthy/blood-pressure/>)

**Region**

Nationwide

[Before Damage is Done](https://irishheart.ie/campaigns/blood-pressure/) (<https://irishheart.ie/campaigns/blood-pressure/>)

**Date Entered/Updated**

12th May, 2025

**Expiry Date**

10th Jul, 2025

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**Source URL:** <https://www.activelink.ie/community-exchange/news/115530-before-damage-is-done-campaign-encourages-blood-pressure-check>