

Every year motorists will put their car through an MOT. Every few years a nice chap will come around to the house and check the boiler. Probably not as often as you should, you'll check to see if the smoke alarm is still working. Pet owners will routinely de-flea and worm their animals and possibly do a quick dental inspection. But how often do we check ourselves to see if we are fit and healthy? Evidence suggests almost never, thus like a chimney that hasn't been swept we store up problems for ourselves later down the line.

A constituent wrote to me recently saying he had heard of a "health check" but wanted more information on how he could access it. He was right to do so because in the past not much has been said about the NHS Health Check, which is a national risk assessment and prevention programme that identifies people at risk of developing heart disease, stroke, diabetes, kidney disease and certain types of dementia, and helps them take action to avoid, reduce or manage these health problems.

Everyone between the age of 40 and 74 is able to take advantage of the check once every five years, unless you've been diagnosed with a condition already, in which case you'll already be receiving regular checks.

Some of these checks are being done in the community to help those who rarely visit the GP or have yet to register at a surgery, which I think is an excellent way of getting personalised advice to as many people as possible.

I have had mine done. I have to increase my intake of fruit and vegetables and am typing this with a mouth full of grapes. But while I wait to get my car serviced and my chimney swept, you'll be pleased to hear that I've little or no risk of the identified conditions, so (touch wood) there'll be no by-election frenzy here!