

Part two – for families, carers and disability service providers



People with an intellectual disability can have an annual health assessment by their GP covered by Medicare. This is under the Medicare health assessment items 718 and 719.

People with intellectual disabilities are eligible for this assessment if they have an IQ below 70 and would benefit from assistance with daily living activities. If the GP needs help to decide if a patient is eligible, he or she can seek confirmation from a disability service that has assessed the patient or from a paediatrician.

The health assessment provides a framework for GPs to assess the physical and psychological health of patients with an intellectual disability and to identify any medical intervention and preventative health care required.

It is important that people with intellectual disabilities access these new items, as they may have undiagnosed health conditions they are not able to explain or that has not been observed. Also, people with intellectual disabilities often do not ask for preventative health checks that other people get.

To assist a person with an intellectual disability to access the assessment, first talk to the person about the assessment, and show them the part of this brochure written for this purpose. Then ask and arrange with the person's GP to carry out the assessment. This will involve working out with the receptionist when the GP is available for a lengthy appointment.

What's involved in the health assessment?

The assessment is comprehensive and will take some time to complete. To prepare, you should bring any health records and current medication (including Webster packs) with you. Work out with the person and their family or other carer who should accompany the person to the assessment. It should be someone who knows the person and their health well. Sometimes, it will be valuable for more than one person to go with the person, for example a parent and case manager.

The GP gets consent for the assessment from the patient, or if he or she does not understand, from a family member or other representative.

The health assessment includes:

- collecting information, including taking or updating a patient history;
- assessing the patient's physical and psychological health and health related aspects of their daily functioning;
- deciding whether any medical intervention and preventative health care is required; and
- providing a written report to the patient, the patient's carer and relevant disability professionals.

During the 12 months following the assessment, the GP should review and adjust treatment as necessary, as part of normal medical care. GPs are able to conduct a new assessment annually.

Medicare health assessment for people with an intellectual disability

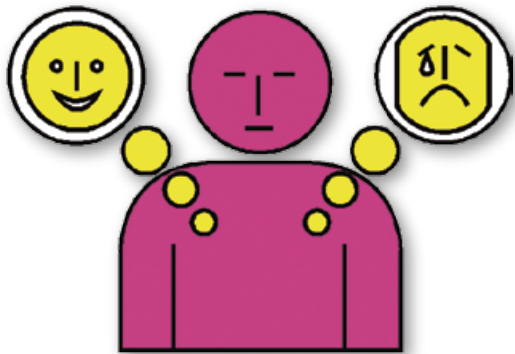
Items 718 and 719

Part one - for consumers

Ask your Doctor (GP) about having a Medicare health assessment

A health assessment means your doctor can find out:

- how you are feeling
- if you have any health problems
- if you need someone else's help.



How do you get a health assessment?

You or someone who helps you can contact your doctor and ask for an assessment.

What do I need for the assessment?

It is a good idea to take someone who knows about you to the assessment. It should be someone you trust. Or you may want to talk to the doctor by yourself.

Discuss any problems you are worried about with the person who comes with you to the doctor.

Bring any health records you have as well as any tablets you take.

If you keep a personal health diary, bring this too.



What will happen during the health assessment?

The doctor has to check how well your body is and how you are feeling. This will take some time.

It is important to be honest with your doctor about how you feel.

The things you say to your doctor are kept private.

The doctor will ask you questions as well as check on your body.

If you do not feel comfortable about anything that happens at your visit, tell your doctor or the person who came with you.

What will happen after the assessment?

The doctor will talk to you about what they found. They will also talk about any changes to your tablets or other ways to make your health better.

You can ask for a health check every year, or your doctor may suggest that to you.

