

Adferiad



Physical Health Check Tool

Supporting you to
manage your physical
health alongside your
mental health

Introduction

When you are struggling with your mental health you may be very focused on your mental wellbeing, but it is important to keep on top of your physical health too.

The NHS recommends that people with certain mental health conditions should have an annual health check with their GP to support them to be as physically well as possible. If you go for your annual health check, they will look at

- The level of cholesterol in your blood
- The level of glucose (sugar) in your blood
- Your blood pressure
- Whether you smoke
- How much alcohol you drink
- Your height and weight

Most people will get a letter or a text message from their GP practice to remind them when it is time for their annual physical health check, but you can always ask to have these tests done at other points of the year rather than wait for your invitation.

The purpose of this tool is to support you to work in partnership with your healthcare professionals (and carers if appropriate) to make sure that you get these checks done every year, and that you have appropriate follow-up support.

It gives an overview of what each of the checks are and how they are done, along with information to help you understand your results. It also has space for you or your healthcare professionals to note down who did the checks and when so that you have a record of them.

Thank you to Rethink Mental Illness, our English counterpart in Mental Health UK, for allowing us to use their resources to create this booklet.

Contents

Section 1: Height and Weight	4
Section 2: Pain Management	6
Section 3: Alcohol Intake	8
Section 4: Smoking Status	10
Section 5: Injection Site Care and Wound Care	12
Section 6: Blood Pressure and Pulse	14
Section 7: Blood Glucose	16
Section 8: Other Important Checks to Consider	18

Section 1

Height and Weight

Sometimes when we take certain medications, have been inactive for a long period of time, or as a result of other factors like change in appetite, our weight can fluctuate up or down. Sometimes, eating healthily can seem expensive and too difficult to navigate.

Your body mass index (BMI) is calculated by measuring your height and weight, and it is generally advised to be at or around 25, but some people fall above or below this number.

However, there are many different factors which influence this that you can discuss with your health practitioner such as your GP or nurse.

Date	Who took the measure?	What was the result?

Height Conversion Chart

ft. in.	4'10"	4'11"	5'0"	5'1"	5'2"	5'3"	5'4"	5'5"	5'6"	5'7"
cm	147	150	152	155	157	160	163	165	168	170

ft. in.	5'8"	5'9"	5'10"	5'11"	6'0"	6'1"	6'2"	6'3"	6'4"	6'5"
cm	173	175	178	180	183	186	188	191	193	196

What action do I need to take?

Weight Conversion Chart

st. lb.	6 st.	6 st. 7	7 st.	7 st. 7	8 st.	8 st. 7	9 st.	9 st. 7	10 st.	10 st. 7	11 st.	11 st. 7	12 st.	12 st. 7
kg	38.1	41.3	44.5	47.6	50.8	54.0	57.2	60.3	63.5	66.7	69.9	73.0	76.2	79.4

st. lb.	13 st.	13 st. 7	14 st.	14 st. 7	15 st.	15 st. 7	16 st.	16 st. 7	17 st.	17 st. 7	18 st.	18 st. 7	19 st.	19 st. 7
kg	82.6	85.7	88.9	92.1	95.3	98.4	101.6	104.8	108.0	111.1	114.3	117.5	120.7	123.8

Section 2

Pain Management

Pain is usually a protective mechanism that alerts your brain that your body is being harmed in some way.

The nerves in the affected area send messages via your spinal cord to your brain. The brain locates the injury and triggers a healing process.

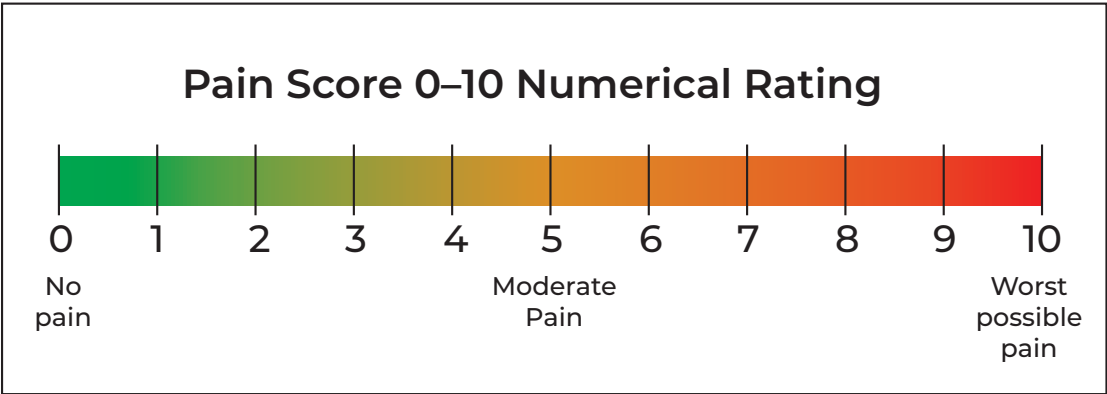
Pain signals may be when we have an injury or tissue damage caused by illness. The nerves in the affected area of the body become more sensitive than normal so pain signals are triggered more easily and warn us if there is any further threat to the painful area.

Pain isn't just a physical sensation it can have emotional effects too.

However, there are many different factors which influence this that you can discuss with your health practitioner such as your GP or nurse.

Date	Who took the measure?	What was the result?

What action do I need to take?



Section 3

Alcohol intake

Alcohol intake is measured by calculating how many units you drink per week, and this will be discussed in your check. A unit is a measure used to tell how strong a drink is. A unit is equivalent to 10ml of pure alcohol.

Regularly drinking more than 14 units of alcohol per week can pose a risk to your health. It can cause liver problems, reduced fertility, high blood pressure and increase the risk of heart attack and certain cancers.

The table on the next page can tell you how many units are in different types of drinks, so that you can estimate how many units you drink per week.

Date	Who took the measure?	What was the result?



Scan here to find out how many units are in your drinks

What action do I need to take?

Units per drink

1 A single 25ml shot of spirits (for example vodka, rum, gin).	1.5 A small glass of wine (125ml).	2 A pint of lower strength beer, lager or cider.	2.1 A standard glass of wine (175ml).	3 A large glass of wine (250ml).
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Section 4

Smoking status

As a part of your physical health check, you will be asked whether you smoke.

This is because smoking puts people at an increased risk of some cancers and lung conditions, and cardiovascular problems.

If you smoke, whether you are a social smoker or have been a heavy smoker for most of your life, it is never too late to quit. There are evidence-based therapies and treatments available to help you quit, like nicotine replacement products, medications and support groups.

You can get a lot of help and support to quit smoking, and also help you to manage the challenge of stopping smoking - especially if you use smoking to help with your mental wellbeing.

Date	Who took the measure?	What was the result?

What happens when I quit?

After 20 minutes

Check your pulse rate, it will already be starting to return to normal.

After 48 hours

All carbon monoxide is flushed out. Your lungs are clearing out mucus and your senses of taste and smell are improving.

After 8 hours

Your oxygen levels are recovering, and the harmful carbon monoxide level in your blood will have reduced by half.

After 72 hours

If you notice that breathing feels easier, it's because your bronchial tubes have started to relax. Also your energy will be increasing.

What action do I need to take?

What happens when I quit? (continued)

After 2–12 weeks

Blood will be pumping through to your heart and muscles much better because your circulation will have improved.

After 1 year

Great news! Your risk of heart attack will have halved compared with a smoker's.

After 3–9 months

Any coughs, wheezing or breathing problems will be improving as your lung function increases by up to 10%.

After 10 years

More great news! Your risk of death from lung cancer will have halved compared with a smoker's.

(from NHS)

Section 5

Injection site care and wound care

Individuals who have injected drugs present challenges when providing wound care.

They may have self – treated abscesses and wounds before seeking help, the infection or wound could be large.

All aspects of the person’s background will have an impact on the wound healing.

Wounds need careful assessment and diagnosis. Correct diagnosis of the wound is critical for the proper treatment to be provided.

Treatment decisions must include pain control, financial concerns, living arrangements and conditions and the individuals ability to carry on the care.

Education is a critical part of the process to enhance the wound healing process.

Date	Who took the measure?	What was the result?

What action do I need to take?

Section 6

Blood Pressure and Pulse

A blood pressure test is a simple way of seeing the strength which your blood pushes on your arteries as it is pumped around your body. It is important to try and keep this at a healthy level as high blood pressure can lead to complications such as heart attacks and strokes.

The procedure involves placing a cuff around your arm which then tightens and releases. It reads both your systolic pressure (the pressure when your heart pushes blood out) and diastolic pressure (the pressure when your heart rests in between beats).

Blood pressure is recorded as a higher figure (systolic) 'over' a lower figure (diastolic).

The pulse is the rhythmic dilation of an artery generated by the opening and closing of the aortic valve in the heart. Our pulse rate, also known as your heart rate, is the number of times your heart beats per minute. A normal resting heart rate should be between 60 to 100 beats per minute, but it can vary from minute to minute.

Heart rates vary from person to person. Knowing your heart rate can help you gauge your heart health.

Date	Who took the measure?	What was the result?

Normal heart rate by age

Age	Resting heart rate
Children (3–4 years)	80–120 bpm
Children (5 to 6 years)	75–115 bpm
Children (7 to 9 years)	70–110 bpm
Children 10 years or older, and adults of any age	60–100 bpm

What action do I need to take?

Normal blood pressure by age

Age	Systolic Range	Diastolic Range
Adolescent (14–18 years)	90–120	50–80
Adult (19–40 years)	95–135	60–80
Adult (41–60 years)	110–145	70–90
Older adult (61 and older)	95–145	70–90

Section 7

Blood Glucose

This test checks how much glucose (sugar) is in your blood and whether it is within a healthy range.

Blood sugar is usually tested with a small finger prick and can be used to check for and monitor type 2 diabetes.

Type 2 diabetes is a condition where glucose in your blood becomes too high due to problems with a hormone called insulin. This can cause symptoms such as excessive thirst, needing the toilet often and extreme tiredness.

The finger prick test will give a score that will tell you and your healthcare professional how much glucose is in your blood and whether you are advised to take any action. Glucose is measured in mmol/l, which means 'millimole per litre'.

Date	Who took the measure?	What was the result?
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What action do I need to take?

Blood sugar target levels

Target Levels by Type	Upon waking	Before meals	At least 90 minutes after meals
Non-diabetic	–	4.0 to 5.9 mmol/L	under 7.8 mmol/L
Type 2 diabetes	–	4 to 7 mmol/L	under 8.5 mmol/L
Type 1 diabetes	5 to 7 mmol/L	4 to 7 mmol/L	5 to 9 mmol/L

(from NICE guidelines and the International Diabetes Federation)

Section 8

Other important health checks to consider

This section outlines other health checks that you might want to consider as part of looking after your physical health.

They are not part of the annual physical health check, but are part of other health programmes run by the NHS.

Bowel cancer screening

Bowel cancer can affect both men and women. Possible signs of bowel cancer include:

- Bleeding from your bottom.
- Blood in your stools.
- A change in bowel habit for three weeks or more (especially to looser or runny stools).
- Unexplained weight loss.
- Unexplained extreme tiredness.
- A pain or lump in your tummy.

If you have noticed any of these changes, then it is important to ask your GP to check this out. If you are between 51 and 74 years old (in Wales), you will be invited to have a regular bowel cancer screening check every two years.

This is a home testing kit, where you provide a sample of your stools for it to be looked at to see if there is any blood in it. If blood is found, you will be asked to go for more tests to explore the cause of this in case it is cancer, however there are many reasons that blood can be found that are not related to cancer.

Mammograms

If you are a woman aged between 50 and 70 years old and are registered with a GP you will be invited for a mammogram test every three years. Also, men who take antipsychotics may be invited for a mammogram as this medication can affect tissue in your chest area.

A mammogram is an x-ray of the breast. The x-rays are checked to see if there are any abnormalities that could suggest breast cancer. Only female staff carry out mammograms.

Smear tests

All women between 25 and 64 years old who are registered with a GP receive regular invites for cervical screening which tend to be referred to as smear tests. Smear tests check if there are any abnormal cells in the cervix to prevent cervical cancer. If you are between 25 and 64 you will receive an invitation every five years. The test usually takes about 5 minutes.

A doctor or nurse will gently hold your vagina open and brush your cervix to take a sample of cells to be tested. It can feel uncomfortable but is not usually painful. Relaxing as much as possible will make the test easier. If you would specifically like the test to be carried out by a female you can ask for this.

Prostate cancer

All men over 50 can ask their GP about risk factors for prostate cancer, and discuss whether screening is appropriate.

Sexual health screening

It is important to regularly check your sexual health, especially if you get a new partner or start a new relationship. Some areas now offer home testing kits for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) where you can access results online. Otherwise, you can attend your local sexual health clinic in person to ask for sexual health tests.

Dental screening

Going to the dentist and keeping your teeth and gums in check is a key way to stay healthy. Some medications can have an impact on a person's oral health. Some people have to pay for their dentistry, but you may be eligible to free dental care - an NHS dentist will be able to explore this with you.

Eye tests

It is also important to have your eyes checked to make sure they are healthy. You should have a checkup every two years (unless you've been told to go more often or have diabetes).

ECG checks

An electrocardiogram (ECG) is a simple test that can be used to monitor your heart's rhythm and electrical activity. ECG monitoring is useful if you take antipsychotic medications or if there are other factors present which can affect your heart's health.

If you have any concerns about the health of your heart, discuss this with your healthcare professionals who can advise you on whether an ECG would be helpful.

Trauma-Informed Care

For some people, the above screenings and tests can feel intrusive and uncomfortable and could potentially trigger distressing feelings surrounding past experiences.

If this happens, you might find it helpful to use the checklist below to communicate your feelings to a healthcare professional:

☐ Ask me for my consent before touching me

☐ Explain what you are doing before you do it

☐ Give me regular breaks during treatment

☐ Establish a system/sign so I can tell you to stop

☐ Adjust my seating position

☐ Offer me pain relief for minor procedures

☐ Talk to me about what I need from you

☐ Listen to me when I tell you to stop

(Victim Focus, 2019)



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