

Health Assessments

Quality Improvement Toolkit for General Practice

Acknowledgement of Country

Eastern Melbourne PHN acknowledges the Wurundjeri people and other peoples of the Kulin Nation on whose unceded lands our work in the community takes place. We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; and to Elders past and present EMPHN is committed to the healing of Country, working towards equity in health outcomes, and the ongoing journey of reconciliation.

Disclaimer

The information in this toolkit does not constitute medical advice and EMPHN accepts no responsibility for the way in which information in this toolkit is interpreted or used. Unless otherwise indicated, material in this resource is owned by EMPHN. You are free to copy and communicate the work in its current form, as long as you attribute EMPHN as the source of the copyright material.

Due to constant developments in research and health guidelines, the information in this document will need to be updated regularly. Please contact EMPHN if you have any feedback regarding the content of this document.

Resources included in this toolkit not developed by EMPHN have been referenced throughout and these organisations retain copyright over their original work.

About this toolkit – Health Assessments

In this quality improvement toolkit, general practice teams will be provided ideas to support activities to increase number of completed health assessments for eligible patients.

Outcomes of this activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare your practice team for undertaking health assessments. • Make best use of available data sources and information resources. • Raise awareness with eligible patients. • Identify patients eligible for health assessments.
---------------------------	---

How to use this toolkit

The following steps in this toolkit are examples of practical ideas to assist your practice team:

<u>Starting point</u>	Identify your activity goal, QI team and QI activity communication processes
<u>Step 1</u>	Update your team on the latest Health Assessment information
<u>Step 2</u>	Prepare your clinic for undertaking Health Assessments
<u>Step 3</u>	Strategies for increasing participation in Health Assessments
<u>Step 4</u>	Identify eligible cohorts for health assessments
<u>Finishing point</u>	Sustainability check list

Recording your improvement for this activity

It is recommended to review each improvement step and select what may be appropriate for your general practice to consider undertaking and test using Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) cycles to make sustainable changes and record key learnings for your practice team. Use the following template to record your activities.



PDSA Template: [Model for Improvement and PDSA template](#)

Where to get help?

EMPHN general practice improvement & digital enablement: digitalhealth@emphn.org.au

EMPHN practice support: practicesupport@emphn.org.au

HealthPathways Melbourne: info@healthpathwaysmelbourne.org.au

Starting point:

Goal of Health Assessments

Defining the goal of this activity provides your practice team with a statement of what you are trying to accomplish. Review the goal below and adjust the timeline if needed according to your general practice requirements.



QI Activity Goal Example:

Our team will aim to increase completed health assessments for eligible patients within the next 6 months.

Tip: You may choose to refine this goal based on your activity focus area e.g. increasing 75+ health assessments for eligible people over 75 years.

Identify your QI team and QI activity communication processes

Identify your change team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the lead and practice team members to drive quality improvement work Assign roles and responsibilities according to staff skill, interest and position. Allocate protected time for the QI team to perform required tasks e.g. 1hr per week in calendar. Plan frequency of meetings for QI team. Provide access to project files and related policy and procedures
Communication with the practice team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify who will need to be kept informed. Identify the method(s) that will be used to inform and update all staff of any changes resulting from this QI activity e.g. staff/Clinical/Admin/Nurse meetings, email, noticeboard, group chat. Ensure all staff are advised of the chosen communication(s) method. Provide monthly updates to all staff of ongoing changes e.g. add QI to staff/Clinical/Admin/Nurse meetings. Allow staff to contribute ideas and provide opportunities for staff feedback. Distribute minutes/action points following any meetings held and ensure staff are aware of any follow-up needed.

Step 1: Update your team on latest Health Assessment information

Tasks to complete this activity:

Learn the essential steps on Health Assessments by watching our specialised EMPHN webinars:

- Health Assessments in general practice – (1hr 11min length)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-WBNOdQd1d0>
- Implementing Health Assessments in your practice – Quality Improvement webinar (24 min length)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVgH66CJb0E>

Key resources	Details
Department of Health	Medicare Health Assessments: MBS Items 701-707 and 715
RACGP	Guidelines for preventative Activities in General Practice (Red book)
RACGP	Conducting quality health assessments in General Practice

Did you know?

HealthPathways Melbourne provides a pathway on Health Assessments with valuable information for practice teams in one location.

Weblink: [Health Assessments - Community HealthPathways Melbourne](#)

Need Access to HealthPathways?

[Register here](#) or email the team at info@healthpathwaysmelbourne.org.au

Step 2: Prepare your clinic for undertaking Health Assessments

Before starting the activity to identify your patient cohort eligible for a health assessment and invite to attend the clinic for an appointment, as a team consider the following:

Implementation

Discuss the implementation at a practice meeting. Do you have the resources to offer health assessments:

- Do you have consulting room availability?
- What is your capacity (Practice nurse, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner and GP)?
- Consistent use of templates for health assessments in clinical software
- Review consistent recording of patient consent to a health assessment being performed in the patient's clinical record.
- Review current recall and reminder system to ensure a well-defined and effective system is implemented to support health assessments. For further information, refer to [EMPHN recall and reminder Audit](#)

Patient Bookings

- Consider how patient bookings will be made. How long to allocate for each appointment based on the health assessment being performed? (for GP and nurse time).
- How is the booking recorded in the appointment book to notify practice team the nature of the appointment?
- When will you schedule appointments?

Inviting patients to undertake a health assessment

- How many patients will you be offering the Health Assessments to at a time?
- How will you send out invitations? SMS or email?
- Will your team follow up with phone calls and who will be responsible for this task?

How do I choose which health assessment MBS item to use?

The correct health assessment item will depend on:

- practitioner type – GP or Prescribed Medical Practitioners, and
- length of time spent with the patient (i.e. the personal attendance time).

Key resources	Details
MBS Online	Time-Tiered Health Assessments (Items 701, 703, 705, 707, 224, 225, 226, 227)

Step 3: Strategies for increasing participation in Health Assessment

Health Assessments are one of the most effective ways for practices to provide health promotion and prevention services to patients.

Patient awareness and education

Identify health promotion and preventative opportunities to embed in your general practice to increase health assessment awareness.

- Consider running practice promotion activities during National health awareness campaigns such as Women's Health week, Heart Health week, National Diabetes week, Dementia Action week, Movember to name a few.

Opportunistically identify eligible patients for a Health Assessment

Review patients coming into the clinic on the day or the coming week and identify those that are eligible for a health assessment:

- For those patients identified as eligible, notate on their record to speak to the patient to book.
- For patients attending the practice for another reason, use the opportunity to discuss the benefit of having a health assessment and provide education where appropriate. e.g. patient attending practice for cervical screening, promote 45-49-year-old health assessment.



Tip

Utilise Walrus, a point of care tool for GPs and practice nurses, to identify eligible patients for health assessments during a consultation. For installation and training support, send your support request to: digitalhealth@emphn.org.au

Step 4: Identify eligible cohorts for health assessments

As a team, review your practice data to identify your priority populations at your practice and decide what cohort you will focus on to increase completed health assessments.

Note: You may need to check HPOS to ensure that a health assessment has not been performed at another clinic before sending invitations to identified eligible patients.

Data report to use to identify target cohort

Refer to Health Assessment topic specific POLAR Walkthrough resources on EMPHN website: [POLAR Walkthroughs](#)

Tasks to complete this activity:

- Discuss the implementation approach at a practice meeting - [refer back to step 2](#)
- Decide what patient population and health assessment you will focus on first.
- Run POLAR search to find patients who are eligible for the chosen health assessment.
- Record your baseline data of current status of completed health assessments.
- Agree on method to contact patients inviting them to attend the practice for a health assessment. Note you may want to stagger these to avoid appointment issues.
- Check the appointments schedule to see if any of the identified eligible patient's have any future appointments booked and notate on their record to speak to the patient to book.
- Follow up patients
- Record monthly and end of activity data of completed health assessments

Tip



Practices can choose their own health assessments from any criterion other than those examples listed below, however, do not try to undertake activities to increase all health assessments at once. Each health assessment activity will have an individual Goal and target and may require multiple PDSAs and months to complete.

Data search to identify target cohorts may produce large numbers of eligible patients. Agree on the number of patients you will consider contacting to test the activity on a smaller scale first and make the task more feasible for your team.

Health Assessments for people aged 75 years and older

A health assessment of an older person is an in-depth assessment of a patient aged 75 years and over. It provides a structured way of identifying health issues and conditions that are potentially preventable or amenable to interventions in order to improve health and/or quality of life.



Sample PDSA Template: [Increase the number completed over 75 years health assessments in the previous 12 months for eligible people](#)

Key resources	Details
HealthPathways Melbourne	Health Assessments for Older Adults (> 75 Years) Pathway
MBS Online	Time-Tiered Health Assessment - Older Person's Health Assessment provided for people aged 75 years and older

Health Assessments for people aged 45 to 49 years old

The purpose of the 45 to 49 health assessment is to assist patients to make lifestyle changes that will prevent or delay the onset of chronic disease.



Sample PDSA Template: [Increase the number completed over 75 years health assessments in the previous 12 months for eligible people](#)

Key resources	Details
HealthPathways Melbourne	45- to 49-year-old health check pathway
MBS Online	Time-Tiered Health Assessment - People aged 45-49 years who are at risk of developing chronic disease

Health Assessment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

This health assessment aims to identify and address a number of contributors to the high burden of illness amongst this population. The assessment is based on guidelines from the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) – National Guide to a Preventative Health Assessment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.



Sample PDSA Template: [Increase the number completed health assessments for eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.](#)

Key resources	Details
HealthPathways Melbourne	Health assessment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people pathway
RACGP Guidelines	National Guide to preventative health assessment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
RACGP	Useful high-quality MBS item 715 health checks for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People



Activity Check in

Did you complete any of these activities? If yes, document your completed activity using the PDSA template

Finishing point: Sustainability check list - maintaining the change

Document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you recorded your completed activities? • Resource: Model for Improvement and PDSA template
Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt: excellent work, embed that change. • Adapt: determine if a change is needed to the plan and start a new PDSA. • Abandon: Rethink the next PDSA • Lessons can be learned from PDSAs that are abandoned. Keep a record of learnings.
Sustaining project outcomes	<p>Consider which practice documentation may need to be updated to include the change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates to Policy and Procedure manual. • Specific task procedures. • Local signs or instructions. • Staff work practices. • Position descriptions. • Staff induction. • Staff skills development or education.
Communicate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QI project outcome feedback to staff. • Present project strengths and challenges.
Celebrate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrate your outcomes and achievements by sharing a with a morning tea with your team.
Reflect and review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss project strengths and challenges. • Annually review the PDSA outcomes to ensure activities are still being adhered to and completed • Annually review your topic specific activity results. Identify gaps, areas for improvement and set new activity targets if applicable. • Where to next on your continuous QI journey? • Consider potential topics for a new CQI activity, and how your experience with this activity can help you to be more efficient and effective