



Fact Sheet

Health Assessments

There are four time-based MBS health assessment items: **701 (brief)**, **703 (standard)**, **705 (long)** and **707 (prolonged)**. The following categories of health assessments may be undertaken by a medical practitioner (other than a specialist or consultant physician) under these items:

- a Healthy Kids Check for children who are aged at least 3 years and less than 5 years of age, who have received or who are receiving their 4 year old immunisation
- a health assessment for people aged 45-49 years who are at risk of developing chronic disease
- a type 2 diabetes risk evaluation for people aged 40-49 years with a high risk of developing type 2 diabetes as determined by the Australian Type 2 Diabetes Risk Assessment Tool
- a health assessment for people aged 75 years and older
- a comprehensive medical assessment for permanent residents of residential aged care facilities
- a health assessment for people with an intellectual disability
- a health assessment for refugees and other humanitarian entrants

The decision to use any one of these four MBS health assessment items to carry out a health assessment will depend on the practitioner's clinical judgement based on the complexity of the presentation and the type of health assessment used.

Health Assessment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People – MBS Item 715

Medical practitioners providing a health assessment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should use MBS Item 715. This MBS health assessment item has no designated time or complexity requirements. The length of the health assessment will be at the medical practitioner's discretion. MBS Item 715 should be used for health assessments for the following age groups:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are less than 15 years old
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults who are aged 15 years and over but under the age of 55 years
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander older people who are aged 55 years and over

Healthy Kids Check provided by a practice nurse or registered Aboriginal health worker – MBS Item 10986

The MBS health assessment for a Healthy Kids Check provided by a practice nurse or registered Aboriginal health worker on behalf of a medical practitioner is provided under MBS Item 10986.

The table below provides details on the MBS health assessment items:

Item 701	Brief – Attendance by a medical practitioner to undertake a short health assessment, lasting not more than 30 minutes
Item 703	Standard – Attendance by a medical practitioner to undertake a medium health assessment, lasting more than 30 minutes but less than 45 minutes
Item 705	Long – Attendance by a medical practitioner to undertake a long health assessment, lasting at least 45 minutes but less than 60 minutes
Item 707	Prolonged – Attendance by a medical practitioner to undertake an extended health assessment, lasting at least 60 minutes
Item 715	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples health assessments for children, adults and older people
Item 10986	Healthy Kids Check provided by a practice nurse or registered Aboriginal health worker

Components of a health assessment

Health assessments are generally made up of the following elements:

- information collection, including taking a patient history and undertaking or arranging examinations and investigations as required;
- making an overall assessment of the patient;
- recommending appropriate interventions;
- providing advice and information to the patient;
- keeping a record of the health assessment, and offering the patient a written report about the health assessment, with recommendations about matters covered by the health assessment; and
- offering the patient's carer (if any, and if the medical practitioner considers it appropriate and the patient agrees) a copy of the report or extracts of the report relevant to the carer.

Patient consent

The patient or their parent/guardian must be given an explanation of the health assessment process and its likely benefits, and must be asked by the medical practitioner, practice nurse or registered Aboriginal health worker whether they consent to the health assessment being performed. Consent must be noted on the patient record.

'Usual Doctor' and other health professionals

An MBS health assessment item may only be claimed by a medical practitioner, including a general practitioner but not including a specialist or consultant physician. A health assessment should generally be undertaken by the patient's 'usual doctor', that is, the medical practitioner (or medical practitioner in the same practice) who has provided the majority of services to the patient in the past 12 months, and/or is likely to provide the majority of services in the following 12 months. Should a medical practitioner other than the patient's 'usual doctor' or practice nurse undertake the health assessment, a copy of the health assessment record should be forwarded to the patient's 'usual doctor' or practice, subject to the agreement of the patient or their parent/guardian.

The medical practitioner is expected to take a primary role in the following activities when providing a health assessment:

- reviewing and analysing the information collected;
- making an overall assessment of the patient;
- undertaking and arranging investigations;
- making referrals and identifying appropriate follow-up; and
- providing advice to the patient.

Practice nurses and registered Aboriginal health workers may assist medical practitioners in performing a health assessment, in accordance with accepted medical practice and under the supervision of the medical practitioner. This may include activities associated with:

- information collection; and
- providing patients with information about recommended interventions at the direction of the medical practitioner.

All other components of the health assessment must include a personal attendance by a doctor.

Restrictions on providing a MBS health assessment item

A health assessment should not take the form of a health screening service.

The MBS health assessment items are not available to in-patients of a hospital or care recipients in a residential aged care facility. The exception to this is a comprehensive medical assessment, which is available to a care recipient in a residential aged care facility.

Any ongoing conditions that are identified in the course of a health assessment should be managed using existing MBS general practice attendance items or the MBS follow-up items provided by practice nurses, registered Aboriginal health workers or allied health professionals.

Medical practitioners should not conduct a separate consultation in conjunction with a MBS health assessment item unless it is clinically necessary (ie. the patient has an acute problem that needs to be managed separately from the assessment). The only exceptions are:

- the Healthy Kids Check, where a consultation associated with the four year old immunisation can be conducted on the same occasion; and
- the comprehensive medical assessment, where, if this health assessment is undertaken during the course of a consultation for another purpose, the health assessment item and the relevant item for the other consultation may both be claimed.

MBS Items 701, 703, 705, 707, 715 and 10986 do not apply for services that are provided by any other Commonwealth or State funded services. However, where an exemption under subsection 19(2) of the *Health Insurance Act 1973* has been granted to an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service or State/Territory Government health clinic, MBS Items 701, 703, 705, 707, 715 and 10986 can be claimed for services provided by medical practitioners, practice nurses or registered Aboriginal health workers salaried by or contracted to, the service or health clinic. All requirements of the MBS items must be met.

Where the patient is a Commonwealth concession cardholder or a child under 16 years of age and the service is bulk billed, the GP can also claim a bulk billing incentive payment (MBS Items 10990 and 10991).

Guidelines and Resources

For more detailed information about MBS item descriptors and explanatory notes visit the Department of Health and Ageing website at www.health.gov.au/mbsonline.

For more general information about the MBS items visit the Department of Health and Ageing website at www.health.gov.au/mbsprimarycareitems or phone the Medicare Australia provider enquiry line on 132 150.

- **'SNAP'** (Smoking, Nutrition, Alcohol and Physical activity) - A population health guide to behavioural risk factors in general practice. www.racgp.org.au/guidelines/snap
- 'Guidelines for Preventive Activities in General Practice' www.racgp.org.au/redbook
- 'Putting Prevention into Practice'. Guidelines for the implementation of prevention in the general practice setting. www.racgp.org.au/guidelines/greenbook
- 'Overweight and Obesity in Adults: A Guide for General Practitioners', a National Health and Medical Research Council publication at www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/obesityguidelines-guidelines-adults.htm
- The Department of Health and Ageing's Lifescrpts guidelines and evidence cards, assessment tools and prescription pads available at www.health.gov.au/lifescrpts or <http://www.agpn.com.au/programs/chronic-disease-prevention-and-management2/lifestyle-interventions/lifescrpts>
- 'The National Guide to a Preventative Health Assessment in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples', the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) <http://www.naccho.org.au/Files/Documents/National%20guide%20to%20preventive%20health%20assessment.pdf>

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

May I add the time that a practice nurse or registered Aboriginal health worker spends in assisting with a health assessment to the overall time taken to complete the service?

Yes. A registered Aboriginal health worker or practice nurse can assist the medical practitioner by undertaking the information collection stage of a health assessment and by providing patients with information about recommended interventions (at the direction of the medical practitioner). The time needed to undertake these aspects of the health assessment may be added to the time taken by the medical practitioner to complete the assessment.

Who can receive a health assessment?

The four time-based health assessment items consist of brief, standard, long and prolonged consultations. Medical practitioners may select one of the MBS health assessment items to provide a health assessment service to a member of the target groups that are eligible for a health assessment.

The health assessment requirements for each target group can be found in the Explanatory Notes on the Department of Health and Ageing's website at www.health.gov.au/mbsonline. The Fact Sheets for each target group are available at <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/mha.htm>.

Are proformas available for the health assessments?

Yes. Proformas are available to assist you in completing the health assessments. These can be found on the Department of Health and Ageing's website at <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/mha.htm>

When should I use MBS Item 715?

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples health assessment item is specifically intended to provide Indigenous people with a culturally sensitive health assessment service. The health assessment covers a wide range of conditions and factors that may affect the health of Indigenous people, across the full span of life. MBS Item 715 is particularly recommended for Indigenous children of pre-school age, as it provides a more comprehensive survey of a child's health than the more general Healthy Kids Check.

When should MBS Item 10986 – Healthy Kid Check provided by a practice nurse or registered Aboriginal health worker be used?

A Healthy Kids Check may be provided by a medical practitioner, practice nurse or registered Aboriginal health worker. Whenever a doctor undertakes a Healthy Kids Check directly, he or she should use one of the MBS health assessment items (MBS Item 701, 703, 705 or 707), depending on the length of the consultation and the complexity of the patient's presentation.

If the Healthy Kids Check is delegated to a practice nurse or registered Aboriginal health worker, MBS Item 10986 should be used. In this case, the practice nurse or Aboriginal health worker is responsible for undertaking all aspects of the Healthy Kids Check. However, an MBS Item 10986 service is always provided on behalf of, and under the supervision, of a medical practitioner, who must review the results of the Check and arrange for any follow-up treatment or services.