

# Learning Disability Annual Health Checks

People with a learning disability often have poorer physical and mental health than other people. This does not need to be the case.

Annual health checks are for adults and young people aged 14 or over with a learning disability.

An annual health check helps you stay well by talking about your health and finding any problems early, so you get the right care.

## Who's eligible?

Anyone aged 14 or over who's on their GP's learning disability register can have a free annual health check once a year.

You can ask to go on this register if you think you have a learning disability.

Check with your GP practice if you or the person you care for is on the register.

## How will it help?

You'll get to know your GP better, which will help if you ever do get ill.

Most health problems are simple to treat once you know about them.

Your GP can help stop you getting a serious health condition. This is better than waiting until you're ill.

You can ask your GP questions about your health, how you're feeling, your care or any medicines you take.

## What happens during the annual health check?

During the health check the GP or practice nurse will:

- do a physical check-up, including weight, heart rate, blood pressure and taking blood and urine samples
- talk to you about staying well and if you need any help with this
- ask about things that are more common if you have a learning disability, such as epilepsy, constipation or problems with swallowing (dysphagia)
- talk to you about your medicines
- check to see if your vaccinations are up to date
- if you have a health problem such as asthma or diabetes, the GP or nurse will check how it's going
- check to see if you have any other health appointments, such as physiotherapy or speech therapy
- ask if family and/or carers are getting the support they need
- help make sure that things go well when children move to adult services at the age of 18



## Making reasonable adjustments for you

A reasonable adjustment is when somebody changes how they do things to make it better for you.

People with a learning disability have a legal right for reasonable adjustments to be made so they can get the same benefits from healthcare services as everyone else.

Ask your GP if you need any reasonable adjustments, such as:

- Using pictures, large print, or simpler words to say what's happening
- Booking longer appointments
- Putting an appointment at the beginning or end of the day, if you find it hard to be in a busy waiting room

## How do you get an appointment?

Adults and young people aged 14 or over with a learning disability who are on the GP practice learning disability register should be invited by their GP practice to come for an annual health check.

If your learning disability has a specific cause, the GP or practice nurse will often do:

For people with Down's syndrome, for example, they may do a test to see if the thyroid gland is working properly.

You'll be asked for your consent (permission) to share information with other services that provide your care. This will help you get the right support if you go to a hospital, for example.

The GP or practice nurse will also give you health information, such as advice on healthy eating, exercise, contraception or stopping smoking.