

How to get an accessible Annual Health Check

What is an Annual Health Check?

An **Annual Health Check** is an appointment you have with your doctor once a year.

Annual Health Checks are important to help:

- Make sure you are healthy and spot health problems sooner.
- Make sure you are on the right medications.
- You to understand what you need to do to be healthier.
- You understand what your doctor can do to help you.
- Your doctor to understand how they can help you better.

At the end of your Annual Health Check you will have a **Health Action Plan**.

A **Health Action Plan** is a way to make sure you and your doctor are doing the right things to help you be healthier.

It is important to talk to the people who support you about your Annual Health Check so they can help you.

Your Annual Health Check is about you and you should be the focus.

They should make sure you have the chance to share what you think and feel.

How to get an Annual Health Check

Contact your GP Practice and ask if you are eligible for an Annual Health Check.

You are eligible if:

- You are on the Learning Disability Register
AND
- You haven't had an Annual Health Check in the last 12 months.

Everybody with a learning disability can get an Annual Health Check if they are on the **Learning Disability Register**.

The **Learning Disability Register** tells staff at the GP Practice which patients have a learning disability.

If you don't know if you are on the Learning Disability Register you can contact your GP Practice and ask if you are on it.

If you are not on the Learning Disability Register and you have a learning disability you can ask them to put you on it.

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You do not need to have a diagnosed learning disability to be put on the Learning Disability Register.

When talking about this it is better to say you have a learning disability (not a learning difficulty).

Click this link to download a letter you can take to your GP asking for your Annual Health Check: dimensions-uk.org/mygpandme

What will happen at your Annual Health Check

Each doctor is different and might do the Annual Health Check in a different way.

But there are things they should do.

If you are uncomfortable with any questions, tests or checks you do not have to do them.

But your doctor can help you better if they have lots of information about you.

Your doctor should talk to you about your health.

They should ask you about:

- How you are feeling
- If you have any worries about your health
- How you are managing any medical conditions you already have
- How you are getting on with medicines you are taking
- Anything about your health and wellbeing that has changed
- What vaccines you have had
- How they can support your health and wellbeing

Your doctor might carry out these tests:

- Height
- Weight
- Temperature
- Blood pressure
- Blood oxygen

You can ask them to explain what each test is for.

You can ask them to explain how they will do each test.

Your doctor might talk to you about the results from these tests.

They might ask you to do some things to help with your health and wellbeing. Things like:

- Booking appointments for more tests or checks.

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- Changing some medicine you take, or how you take it.
- Changing what you eat to be healthier.
- Exercising a bit more.

They will put what you have decided together into a Health Action Plan.

They will use your Health Action Plan to make sure you are doing the right things to help you be healthier.

Your doctor can go to this webpage to find out more about accessible and inclusive Annual Health Checks: dimensions-uk.org/mygpandme

How your doctors can help make your Annual Health Check accessible

You can ask for some things called ‘**reasonable adjustments**’ at your doctor’s appointments.

Reasonable adjustments are small changes that can help make things better and easier for you.

The law says you have the right to these changes so don’t be afraid to ask.

Everyone needs different things so think about what would help you.

Your doctor should try to make as many changes as possible.

If they can’t make any changes they should talk to you about what they can do to help instead.

Here are some reasonable adjustments you can ask for when you book the appointment for your Annual Health Check:

A longer appointment

This means you will have longer with the doctor or nurse.

Extra time can help make sure you are comfortable with checks or tests.

Extra time can help when you are talking to them.

An appointment at the start or the end of the day

It might not be as busy at the start or the end of the day.

You can also ask the receptionist when the quietest time of day for that practice is.

A quiet area or room to wait in

This can help you to relax when you arrive.

This will help you be relaxed for your appointment.

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Someone to collect you from the waiting area

This will help you relax because you won't need to listen for your name.

This also means you can wear ear defenders or headphones if they help you.

Accessible information

They might be able to give you information in the best way for you.

This can be things like easy read, big text sizes or braille.

There is a free template and guide they can use to make easy read information on this webpage: dimensions-uk.org/mygpandme

A chaperone

(Say shap-er-own)

You can ask for someone you trust to go to your appointment with you, this is called a chaperone.

When someone you trust comes with you they can help you ask questions and remember what the doctor said.

Some people might not want to be alone with a stranger so a chaperon can help.

How you can get ready for your Annual Health Check

Tell them about reasonable adjustments in plenty of time

It is important to tell the staff about the reasonable adjustments you need before your appointment.

This will give them time to make them or do something different.

Or explain what they can't do.

Collect information about your health and wellbeing

This information will help you answer their questions.

Write down when you feel unwell, what was happening and how it felt.

Write down what medications you take and how they make you feel.

Write down what is normal for your health, such as temperature or blood pressure.

These are sometimes called baselines.

Write down what makes you feel healthier.

You might have other documents about your health information.

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Ask the people who support you about this.

Write down what you want from the appointment

Write down things you would like to tell them.

Write down things you are worried about.

Write down questions you would like to ask.

Practice tests and checks

If you are worried about the tests and checks ask someone who supports you to help you prepare.

You can practice some of them so you know what to expect.

There are videos you can watch online too.

Use communication aids

Communication aids are things like text to speech devices or apps and picture cards.

If you use communication aids or prompts take these to your appointment.

It can help to tell the doctors' reception staff about them before your appointment.

After your appointment

Speak to the person you went with or someone else you trust about what happened.

Ask someone you trust for help with new medicines, diet or exercise if you need it.

If you find Annual Health Checks stressful it can help to plan something nice to do after.

Well done for looking after your health.