



# MEDICARE 45 YEAR OLD HEALTH CHECK

MBS item 717

**Australian Better Health Initiative:**  
A joint Australian, State and Territory Government initiative.

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

This material is a summary only and must be read in conjunction with the Medicare Benefits Schedule Book.

### Which patients are eligible for this item?

The once only health check is available to people between 45 and 49 years (inclusive) of age with at least one identifiable risk factor.

The decision about whether an individual is at risk of developing a chronic disease rests with the clinical judgement of the GP, but a specific risk factor must be identified. Factors the GP may consider but are not limited to, are:

- Lifestyle risk factors:
  - smoking
  - physical inactivity
  - poor nutrition or alcohol misuse
- Biomedical risk factors:
  - high cholesterol
  - high blood pressure
  - impaired glucose metabolism or excess weight
- Family history of a chronic disease.

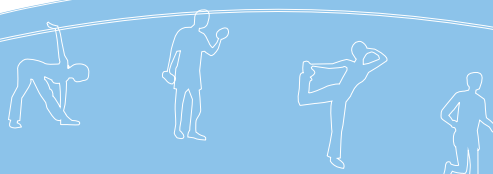
The item does not apply to admitted patients of a hospital or day-hospital facility.

The patient must not have previously received a health check under item 717. Note that if a GP is unsure whether a patient has previously received a health check under item 717, he/she may call Medicare Australia, with the patient present, on 132 011.

### Are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people eligible for this item?

Yes, but Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged between 45-49 years can alternatively access access the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Adult Health Check (Item 710). GPs are encouraged to use item 710 where appropriate.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people may also receive a health check under item 717 if they meet the patient eligibility requirements.



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## What is a chronic disease or condition for the purposes of this item?

For the purposes of this item, a chronic disease or condition is one that has been or is likely to be present for at least six months, including but not limited to asthma, cancer, cardiovascular illness, diabetes mellitus, mental health conditions, arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions.

For patients with an existing chronic condition it is at the clinical judgement of the GP whether the patient should receive a health check under this item or be managed through other items and services.

## Can this health check be completed in one consultation?

**Yes.** However, all parts of the health check must have been undertaken. If test results are not available, the GP may choose to either complete the health check (and review the test results and discuss the assessment of the patient in a subsequent, separately billed consultation) or defer completion of the health check until the results are available.

In every case, it is important that all of the health needs identified in the health check are followed-up.

## Is there a Medicare rebate?

**Yes.** The Medicare rebate is paid at 100% of the schedule fee. Where the health check is bulk billed and the patient is a Commonwealth concession card holder, the GP is also entitled to claim a bulk billing incentive item.

Detailed Medicare rebate information is available from the Medicare Benefits Schedule Book or at [www.health.gov.au/mbsonline](http://www.health.gov.au/mbsonline)

## Which doctors can claim this item?

Item 717 can be claimed for a service by a medical practitioner, including a general practitioner but not including a specialist or consultant physician. The item can be used by both vocationally recognised (VR) and non-VR GPs, in either accredited or non-accredited general practices.

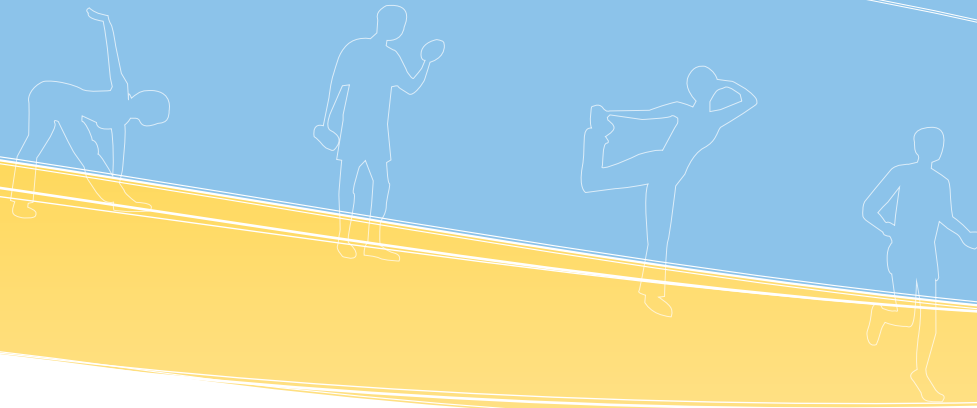
## When can this item be claimed for a patient with risk factors?

Where possible, practices are encouraged to identify whether a patient is at risk of developing a chronic disease through normal patient management and examination of patient records.

In circumstances where the GP is unsure whether the patient is at risk of developing a chronic disease, the GP may choose either to:

- Determine whether the patient has a risk factor and, if so, undertake the health check in the same visit; or
- Determine whether the patient has a risk factor as part of a consultation and, if so, undertake the health check during a subsequent visit.

If the patient does not have a specific risk factor, the appropriate attendance item should be billed. Item 717 should not be billed in these circumstances.



## Can another attendance item be claimed in conjunction with item 717 for the same patient on the same day?

Item 717 cannot be claimed in conjunction with another GP attendance item on the same day, except where this is clinically required. In these exceptional cases, the claim for the attendance item should be annotated to indicate that the attendance was not related to the health check.

## Can item 717 be claimed more than once for a patient?

**No.** A Medicare rebate is payable for this item once only for each eligible patient.

If a GP is unsure whether a patient has already received a health check under item 717, he/she may call Medicare Australia, with the patient present, on 132 011.

## Can a GP provide preventive care under Medicare for a patient who is not eligible for a health check under item 717?

**Yes,** where a patient is not within the eligible age range or because he/she has previously received a health check under this item. In these cases, GPs can use normal attendance items under the MBS to provide preventive care to their patients.

Some patients may also be eligible to receive a health check or a health assessment under another specific MBS item, such as:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Health Check	Birth to 14 years	MBS Item 708
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Adult Health Check	15 to 54 years	MBS Item 710
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Older Person's Health Check	55 years and over	MBS Items 704 & 706
Older Australians Health Check	75 years and over	MBS Item 700 & 702
Residents of aged care facilities (Comprehensive Medical Assessment)		MBS Item 712
Refugees and other humanitarian entrants to Australia		Item 714 or 716

## Information and resources

Resource details are outlined in the 45 – 49 year old health check Fact Sheet, available at [www.health.gov.au/epc](http://www.health.gov.au/epc), the *Lifescrpts* Fact Sheet [www.health.gov.au/lifescrpts](http://www.health.gov.au/lifescrpts) or [www.agpn.com.au/site/index.cfm?display=5267](http://www.agpn.com.au/site/index.cfm?display=5267)

