75+ Health Assessment

A yearly check to help you stay well, independent and driving

Medicare funds a yearly health assessment for everyone aged 75 and over. It is not a test you pass or fail. It is a longer, unhurried appointment with our nurse and your GP that looks at your health as a whole, not just the problem of the day, and finds small things before they become big ones.

01 WHAT WE LOOK AT

- **Your body.** Blood pressure, weight, eyesight, hearing, continence, sleep and pain.
- **Your medicines.** Everything you take, including vitamins and pharmacy products, to check they still suit you.
- **Falls and balance.** Strength, walking, footwear and safety at home.
- **Memory and mood.** How you are thinking and feeling, and whether you feel lonely.
- **Daily life.** Managing at home, support and carers, and what you enjoy doing.
- **Vaccines and planning.** Flu, COVID-19, pneumococcal, shingles and RSV, and your wishes for future care.

02 WHY IT IS WORTH DOING

- **Falls are common but often preventable.** About 1 in 3 people aged 65 and over fall each year. Balance exercises, a medicine review, better lighting and the right glasses all reduce the risk.
- **Hearing and eyesight change slowly,** so many people do not notice. Untreated hearing loss is one of the largest risk factors for dementia that can be changed.
- **Medicines affect us differently as we age.** A review can stop medicines you no longer need and ease side effects such as dizziness or drowsiness.
- **You leave with a plan.** You receive a written summary, with any referrals or follow-up already arranged.

03 HOW IT HAS HELPED OTHERS

- **Margaret, 79.** Came in for her licence medical and mentioned two near-falls getting out of bed. Her blood pressure tablets were making her light-headed when she stood up, so the dose was adjusted and a physiotherapist gave her balance exercises. She is still driving and has not fallen since.
- **Ron, 82.** His wife said the television was always too loud. A hearing test led to hearing aids, and he is enjoying conversations at the bowls club again. He also caught up on his shingles vaccine.
- **Joyce, 76.** Had lived alone since her husband died and admitted she was feeling flat and not eating well. She now goes to a weekly community group, has seen a dietitian, and has an advance care plan so her family knows her wishes.

These stories are composites of common situations. Names and details are invented to protect privacy.

04 YOUR DRIVING MEDICAL

In NSW, drivers aged 75 and over need a medical assessment every year to keep their licence. Transport for NSW sends a letter about eight weeks before your birthday, and the medical can be done up to six months early. From 85, a practical driving assessment is also needed every second year for a full licence, or you can choose a modified licence for local driving.

Do both in one visit. When your driving medical is done as part of your 75+ Health Assessment, the appointment is bulk billed. A driving medical booked on its own is privately billed. When your letter arrives, call us and ask for a 75+ Health Assessment with your driving medical.

05 WHAT HAPPENS ON THE DAY

Our practice nurse usually starts, taking measurements and asking about your health, medicines, daily activities, memory and mood, and how things are at home. Your GP then reviews the findings with you, examines you and agrees a plan that fits what matters to you.

The plan may include changes to medicines, a pharmacist Home Medicines Review (see our sheet PI-03), vaccines, or referrals to services such as physiotherapy, podiatry, audiology, an occupational therapist or a dietitian. Some of these may be subsidised through Medicare or My Aged Care, and we will explain the options.

06 GETTING READY

- Bring all your medicines in a bag, including vitamins and creams, plus your glasses and hearing aids.
- Bring your Transport for NSW letter if your licence medical is due.
- Allow about an hour. You are welcome to bring a family member or carer.
- Think about what matters most to you, such as staying in your home, driving or travelling.

SEE YOUR GP IF

- You have had a fall, or feel unsteady on your feet
- You notice changes in your memory, hearing or eyesight
- A medicine is making you dizzy, drowsy or confused
- You are finding it harder to manage at home
- You are worried about your driving

GET URGENT HELP

Call 000, or go to the nearest emergency department, if you have:

- chest pain, or sudden trouble breathing
- sudden weakness or numbness of the face, arm or leg, or trouble speaking
- a fall with a head injury, or you cannot get up
- sudden confusion that is new for you

This sheet gives general information. It does not replace advice from your GP, who knows your health and history. Call us on (02) 9144 7340 to book.

Sources: Australian Government. Medicare health assessment items 701 to 707. Transport for NSW. Older drivers guide; Fitness to drive medical assessments. AIHW. Falls in older Australians. Livingston G et al. Dementia prevention, intervention, and care. Lancet Commission. 2024.