



Australian Government
Department of Health and Ageing

HEALTH CHECK for men and women aged 45–49 years with at least one risk factor for chronic disease

MBS item 717

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

BUSINESS CASE

The purpose of this document is to demonstrate the level of remuneration available to general practice by providing the 45-49 year old health check (Medicare item number 717) to eligible patients within the practice population.

Before using this document, readers are encouraged to review the model practice description and listed assumptions as these are not applicable to all practices. Practices are encouraged to adapt the business case below to determine the potential remuneration in systematically providing the health check to all eligible patients within their practice population.

This document also outlines the patient benefits of Item 717 and should be used in conjunction with the Medicare Benefits Schedule book and companion AGPN health check information resources.

This business case is based on the AGPN Nursing in General Practice Business Case Study (undertaken in December 2005)ⁱ and the 45 year old health check business case study developed by General Practice Victoria (November 2006)ⁱⁱ. AGPN acknowledges the contribution of Jan Desley, Gillian Cass, David Menzies, Michael Maalouf and Leigh Barnetby to the development of content within this business case.

Description of Item 717

The Item has been introduced under the Australian Better Health Initiative, a joint initiative of the Council of Australian Governments which aims to enhance the capacity of the health system to promote good health and reduce the burden of chronic disease.

The 45-49 year old health check is a once only health check to assist with the prevention of chronic disease and to enable early intervention strategies to be put in place where appropriate. A health check at this stage of life can assist patients to make the necessary lifestyle changes to prevent or delay the onset of chronic disease.



Model Practice Description

- The model practice is in an urban area and is in competition with a number of large and small practices, offering extended hours and bulk billing, while others offer specialised services.
- There is a large public hospital nearby and a range of specialists, allied health, complementary medicine and community health services easily accessible.
- The practice opens 8.30am to 5.30pm with late opening to 7.00pm on Thursdays. The GPs work alternate Saturday mornings in return for one half-day during the week.

Medical staff

- The practice has 2 FTE GPs
- Both GPs are vocationally registered.
- The practice has one part-time Practice Nurse

Practice Staff

- The practice has one full time and one part-time receptionist and a full-time practice manager/senior receptionist.

Assumptions and Estimated Workload

- Around 1.5% of the population are aged 45, 46, 47, 48 or 49 years. Around 7.5% of the population are aged 45-49 inclusiveⁱⁱⁱ.
- Allow that up to 90% of those aged 45-49 years have a least one risk factor for chronic disease^{iv}.
- Allow a practice population of 2000, of which, when considering 7.5% of these are aged 45-49 years and 90% of this cohort is assumed to have at least one risk factor for chronic disease, this model assumes the practice will service 135 patients in the first year.
- Given the 45-49 year old health check is a one-off service, in subsequent years, the practice will service patients turning 45 years old, ie 27 patients in the year ongoing.
- This model assumes an estimated nurse time of 30 minutes for data collection, education, referrals. It is acknowledged that some health checks will take longer than others, while others may require less time.
- The estimated time for the GP component of the consultation is 15-20 minutes.

Estimated Annual Fees:

- Year 1 - 135 patients @ \$102.20 per item 717 (100% schedule fee) = \$13,797.00. Each GP within the practice would need to conduct the health check with 67-68 patients in the first year.
- Ongoing years - 27 patients @ \$102.20 per item 717 (100% schedule fee) = \$2,759.40. This requires each GP within the practice to conduct 13-14 health checks per year.



Cost Analysis

Expenditure

- Estimated Practice Nurse cost (30 minutes) = \$20 (based on casual rate of \$40/hour inclusive of superannuation costs and on-costs)
- Estimated GP Cost (15 minutes) = \$40 (based on \$160 per hour salary inclusive of costs)
- Practices using recall and reminder systems should also take into account administration costs

Income

Income is determined to be \$42.20 (given MBS benefit of \$102.20 less combined practice nurse and GP costs of \$60. This provides a 66.6% profit to the practice.

- Potential income in Year 1 – 135 patients by profit of \$42.20 = \$5,697.00
- Potential income in ongoing years – 27 patients by profit of \$42.20 = \$1,139.40

Benefits of the 45-49 year old health check

The key benefits of conducting the 45-49 year health check include:

- Maintaining a focus on wellness and prevention.
- The early identification of chronic disease risk factors can prevent or delay the onset of chronic disease.
- Health checks can also provide opportunistic benefits in terms of identification of any number of other existing conditions/injuries/illnesses requiring treatment;
- The 45-49 year old health check complements other chronic disease management MBS item numbers, including the GP management plan, Team Care Arrangements, Diabetes/Asthma Cycle of Care, enabling continuity of care
- Collecting a patient's social history and updated summary assists practices to meet accreditation standards.
- A comprehensive health assessment also allows for a practitioner to make appropriate referral to other local health services and care.



How to identify eligible patients

A Practice Nurse and Practice Manager can utilise clinical software to search the age cohort 45-49 for specific risk criteria. Practices can also issue surveys to patients within the eligible age group (45-49 years) to determine their eligibility for the health check.

There are a number of clinical software options to assist practices in identifying eligible patients for the 45-49 year old health check. Some useful packages include the PEN Clinical Audit^v and Practice Health Atlas^{vi}.

Practices who are interested in using these tools should contact their local division of general practice, who can assist in implementing measures to identify eligible patients.

Patients should also be identified opportunistically during normal GP visits. Information displayed in the practice waiting room can help patients to enquire about the health check and their eligibility with their GP. Practices may wish to use the sample wall chart provided for this purpose.

There are practice support templates for notifying patients they are eligible for a health check, what this involves and of the health benefits, such as prevention of chronic disease through the management of risk factors. These resources are also included on the Health Check DVD.

It is recommended that the practice nurse discuss identified eligible patients with the GP to ensure a health check is suitable for patients prior to them being contacted.

GPs can also use the Lifescripts resources to identify patients with Lifestyle risk factors who would be eligible for the health check. The 45-49 year old health check Practice Detailing Card and Quick Reference Guide are useful in helping to determine where these resources can be linked with the health check.

Resources such as the RACGP green book are very useful for developing a whole of practice approach to prevention. The RACGP green book can be downloaded from www.racgp.org.au.

Disclaimer

The material within this business case does not take into consideration any individual's or practices financial situation or particular needs. The information contained is provided for general informational purposes only.

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ⁱ <http://www.generalpracticenursing.com.au/site/index.cfm?display=27440>

ⁱⁱ http://www.tedgp.asn.au/programs/chronic%20disease/45yearold_business_model.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ ABS, 2007 *ABS 2006 Census Tables: Australia* <http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/d3310114.nsf/Home/census>

^{iv} AIHW: O'Brien K 2005. *Living dangerously: Australians with multiple risk factors for cardiovascular disease*. Bulletin No. 24. AIHW Cat.No.AUS 57. Canberra: AIHW

^v <http://www.pencs.com.au/>

^{vi} <http://www.healthatlas.org.au/>

