

MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION SHEET

Patients with some mental health problems are at an increased risk of developing physical ill health. It is therefore good practice for people with mental health conditions to see a member of the practice team in order to have a physical health review on an annual basis.

Why should I attend my mental health review?

Whether you are under the care of the GP or a psychiatric specialist, when you are seen at your appointments they will mainly be focusing on your mental health and how well your treatments are working. Your annual mental health review at the surgery is an opportunity to look at your physical health to ensure you are not developing other treatable conditions. During the review you will be able to discuss any health concerns you may have. Feel free to bring a friend or relative with you to the review if you feel it would be helpful.

What will happen at my appointment?

The nurse will have a chat with you about both your physical and mental health. She will ask about your lifestyle and your medication and check your height and weight, along with your blood pressure. She will also discuss with you any health screening you may benefit from and perform some blood tests, in particular checking for diabetes and high cholesterol levels. Depending on what medication you take, you may also require an ECG (heart tracing). She will then be able to advise you about any changes she would recommend. If needed, she will refer you to a doctor for further review.

What lifestyle changes will help me?

- Stopping smoking. This will reduce your risk of developing cardiovascular disease, COPD and cancer. You can get help and support from 0800 052 5855 and www.smokefree.nhs.uk
- Increasing your regular exercise. Advice can be obtained from www.prescription4exercise.com
- Weight loss if your BMI is greater than 25
- Reducing your alcohol intake to 14 units a week for women and 21 units a week for men and stopping any illicit drug use. For help and support contact 0300 555 5999 and www.bdaat.co.uk

What tests may help me?

- Diabetes screen – if you are diabetic this increases the likelihood of developing other problems such as cardiovascular disease and kidney disease. Diabetes is more commonly seen in people with certain mental health diagnoses.
- Cholesterol measurement – too much cholesterol increases the risk of atherosclerosis and cardiovascular disease.
- Blood pressure measurement – high blood pressure is a risk factor for cardiovascular disease.
- Kidney function testing

Further information on mental health can be found at www.nhs.uk, www.mind.org.uk, www.rethink.org, www.sane.org.uk and for patients diagnosed with bipolar disorder, www.bipolaruk.org.uk