

My Practice My Health Toolkit

Supporting you to manage your
physical health



Hammersmith,
Fulham, Ealing
and Hounslow

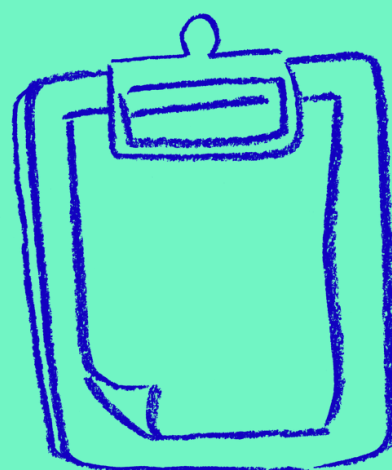
Introduction

It can be challenging to consider your physical health when you have other worries on your mind. As an individual living with a severe mental illness (SMI), your mental health may be your priority.

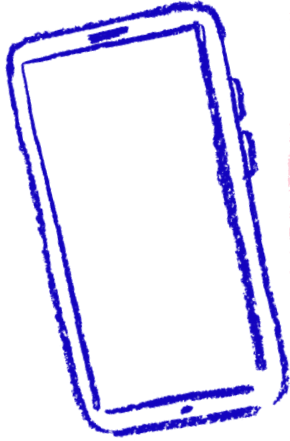
However, your physical health is very important too, and can often have an impact on your mental health.

The NHS recommends that people living with SMI should have a health check every 12 months. These health checks will support you in maintaining and improving your physical health. The health checks that will be done will look at 6 elements:

- 1. Blood pressure and pulse**
- 2. Body Mass Index (BMI)**
- 3. Blood Cholesterol (a type of fat)**
- 4. Blood Glucose (sugar)**
- 5. Smoking**
- 6. Alcohol consumption**



How will your GP get in touch with you?







People living with SMI will receive a letter or a text message from their GP, reminding them of an upcoming annual health check.

GPs will usually call if you have not attended the health check appointment. These tests don't necessarily need to be done on the date set, and can be done earlier, at your convenience upon request.



What is this booklet for?

-  This booklet offers information about health checks, the reason why they are conducted, why they are important and how they are conducted.
-  It also offers a template that may be useful for keeping track of health checks and developing physical health goals as an outcome of the results.
-  There are also resources to support you in making the best decision for your health.
-  Please engage with this booklet, and make sure you follow-up your next annual health check!

Coping with fear of needles

Two of the health checks involve taking a blood sample. If you are afraid of needles, don't be embarrassed, it is very common.

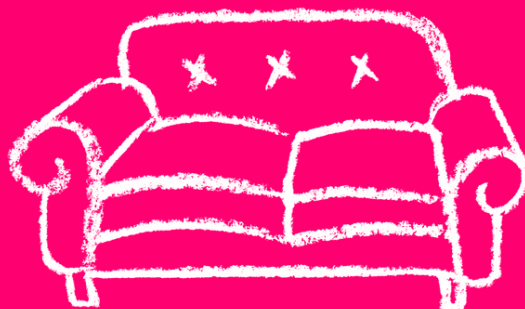
If you have a fear of needles, tell the practitioner doing the blood test. They will support you and reassure you.

There are ways to manage your fear. Below is a technique that can be used if you feel panic (for example heart racing, your chest feels tight, and your stomach churns).

Breathing for relaxation:

- 1. Sit in a comfortable position, with your back upright but not stiff. Let your shoulders and jaw relax.**
- 2. Put one hand low on your belly. Take a long, slow, deep, gentle breath in through your nose and out through your mouth. Try to breathe right down into your belly, but do not force the breath. Just let your body breathe as deeply as is comfortable for you.**
- 3. Do this for 5 breaths.**

If possible, practise this exercise 3 times every day for a week. You can then try to face your fear.



Coping with fear of needles

If your fear of needles causes you to feel faint, below is a simple technique to increase your blood pressure to a normal level again and avoid fainting.



Applied Tension:

1. Sit down somewhere comfortable.
2. Tense the muscles in your arms, upper body and legs. Hold this tension for 10 to 15 seconds or until you start to feel the warmth rising in your face.
3. Release the tension and go back to your normal sitting position.
4. After 20 to 30 seconds, go through the tension procedure again until you feel the warmth in your face.
5. Repeat this sequence until you have practised the tension 5 times.

If you can, practise this sequence 3 times every day for about a week. You can then try to face your fear.

Blood Pressure and Pulse

What is blood pressure?

Blood pressure is the strength with which your blood pushes on the sides of your arteries as its pumped around the body.

Why is it important?

Measuring your blood pressure helps the doctor to understand your likelihood of developing heart diseases, such as strokes, heart attacks, heart failure, and blood clots.

How is it measured?

The doctor will place a cuff around your arm. The cuff tightens and releases, until it gives a reading. The procedure will also measure your heart rate, the speed at which the heart beats. This is measured in beats per minutes.

Date	My Result	What my result means	Do I need to take action?

Action Plan

What action do I need to take?	How will I achieve this?

Body Mass Index (BMI)

What is the Body Mass Index?

The body mass index is a measure that calculates weight status.

Why is it important?

Your BMI can help determine your risk of certain diseases, such as high blood pressure, cardiovascular diseases, breathing problems, type 2 diabetes, and certain cancers.

How is it measured?

The calculation is your weight in kilograms divided by your height in metres squared. Don't worry about working it out yourself, the doctor will tell you.

below 18.5 – you're in the underweight range

between 18.5 and 24.9 – you're in the healthy weight range

between 25 and 29.9 – you're in the overweight range

between 30 and 39.9 – you're in the obese range



Date	My Result	What my result means	Do I need to take action?

Action Plan

What action do I need to take?	How will I achieve this?

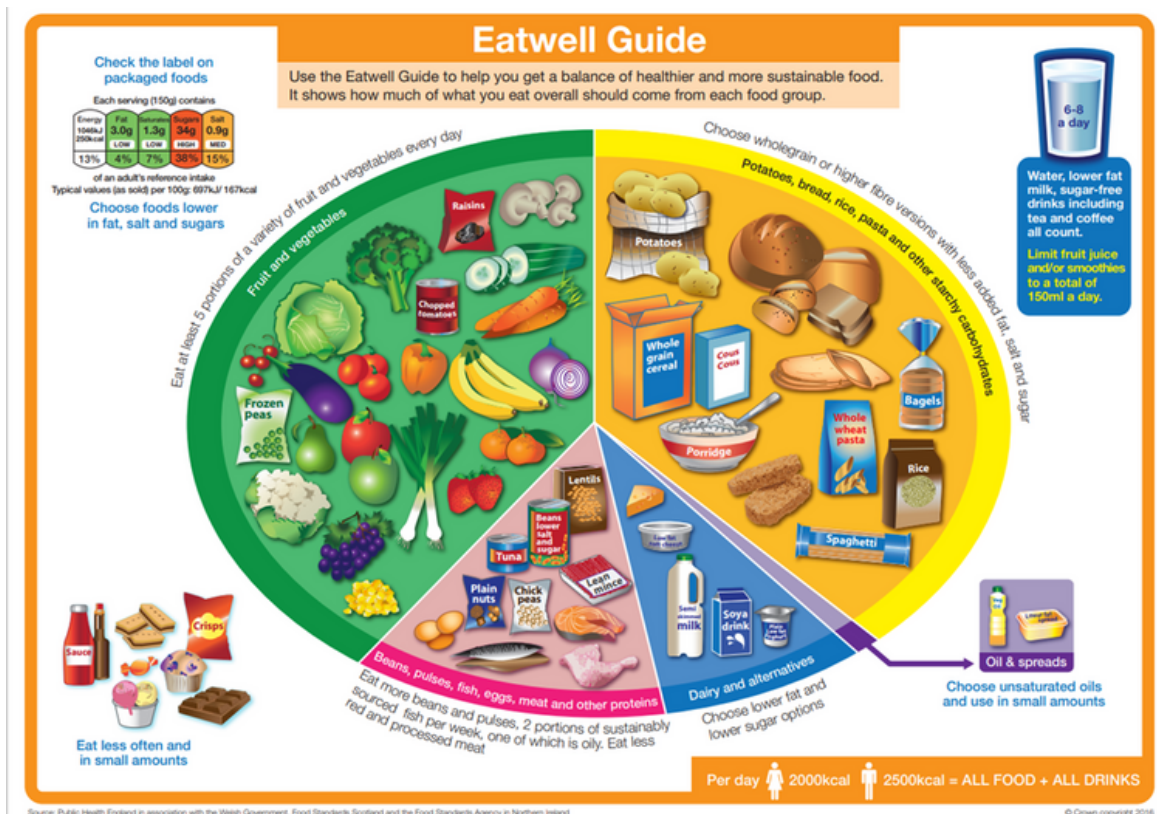
Blood Glucose

What is blood glucose?

Glucose is sugar that has been digested from food or drink. Once digested, it ends up in the bloodstream and is used for energy.

Why is it important?

If you have high blood sugar (hyperglycaemia), it could mean that you are diabetic, or at risk of becoming diabetic (pre-diabetic).



How is it measured?

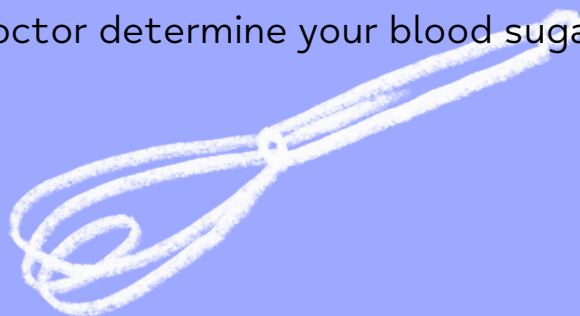
The test measures the amount of glucose attached to your haemoglobin. This helps the doctor determine your blood sugar levels over the last 2 or 3 months.

Normal Below 42

Prediabetes 42 – 47

Diabetes Over 48

(NHS, 2022)



Blood Glucose

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Blood Cholesterol

What is cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a fatty substance that is essential to the human body and its functions.

Why is it important?

If there is a high proportion of cholesterol in the blood, it increases the risk of cardiovascular diseases.

How is it measured?

A blood sample is taken to determine your blood cholesterol levels.

Result:

Total cholesterol

HDL (good cholesterol)

Non-HDL (bad cholesterol)

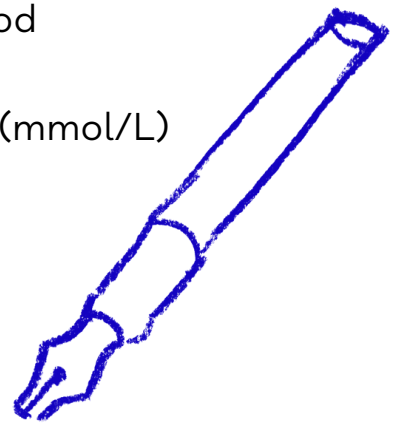
(NHS, 2022)

Healthy level (mmol/L)

5 or below

1 or above

4 or below



Date	My Result	What my result means	Do I need to take action?

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Smoking Status

Why is it important?

Cigarettes contain substances such as nicotine, tar, and many others that are harmful to the human body. They increase the risk of cardiovascular diseases and some cancers.

How is it measured?

You will be asked whether you are a smoker.

Date	My Result	What my result means	Do I need to take action?

Action Plan

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Alcohol Consumption

Why is it important?

Whilst drinking alcohol in small quantities can be safe, drinking regularly can cause health problems. These include increased risks of cardiovascular diseases, liver problems, and certain cancers, if more than 14 units of alcohol are consumed per week.

How is it measured?

Alcohol strength can be measured in units. 1 unit is equivalent to 10 ml of pure alcohol. You can determine your weekly consumption by identifying what you drink on a weekly basis.



Date	My Result	What my result means	Do I need to take action?

Action Plan

What action do I need to take?	How will I achieve this?

Further Support



Single Point of Access

If you, or someone you know, requires support with their mental health, please call the West London NHS Trust Single Point of Access on 0800 328 4444.

They are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

SAMARITANS

Samaritans also offer emotional support to anyone in emotional distress, struggling to cope, or at risk of suicide. You can call them 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year on 116 123.

Safe Space

A place to go if you are in crisis

If you feel you are nearing crisis point you can contact our out of hours Safe Space for support from 5pm-10:30pm 365 days a year:

Ealing Safe Space: 0207 471 0583 or email:

safespaceealing@hfehmind.org.uk

Hounslow Safe Space: 0207 471 0584 or email:

safespacehounslow@hfehmind.org.uk

Hammersmith and Fulham Safe Space: 0207 471 0582 or email:

safespacehf@hfehmind.org.uk

Reference Links

www.nhs.uk/conditions/blood-pressure-test/

www.nhs.uk/conditions/high-cholesterol/cholesterol-levels/

www.nhs.uk/conditions/high-blood-sugar-hyperglycaemia/

www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/stopping-smoking/reasons-to-stop/

www.towcestermedicalcentre.co.uk/https-www-towcestermedicalcentre-co-uk-space-to-talk/alcohol-information/

www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/health-information/needle-phobia-and-overcoming-your-fear#applied-tension



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 **Mind** Hammersmith, Fulham, Ealing and Hounslow

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