



Physical health checks

What are they for?

If you don't eat very well, don't do much exercise, or are a bit overweight you are more likely to have problems with your health in the future, like heart problems, strokes and diabetes. Unfortunately, all of these physical health problems are a lot more common if you also have unusual distressing experiences. This can affect how long you live.

NICE recommends that if you have unusual distressing experiences, especially if you're taking medication you should have regular check ups on your physical health and any medication side-effects too.

You could have these check ups with your early intervention or mental health team, or your GP. Typical physical health checks include; response to medications, including symptoms and side-effects; weight, waist circumference, pulse, blood pressure, blood tests to check hormones, glucose and lipid (fat) levels, general physical health and day-to-day function.

Your team should be able to provide advice about healthy eating and exercise. You can also discuss any non-prescribed therapies you may wish to use (including any complementary medications) and the safety and effects of these therapies in combination with other medication you might be taking.

A note on alcohol and drug use

Sometimes people use alcohol or drugs as a way to cope with difficult experiences, but it can be difficult to tell the difference between the effects of alcohol and drugs, hangovers and come downs, and mental health problems.

After all, alcohol and drugs can make you feel great but they can also make you feel depressed, anxious, suspicious, paranoid and panicky.

Your care coordinator or lead practitioner can talk to you in a helpful and non-judgmental way about the use of tobacco, alcohol, prescription and non-prescription medication and drugs.

They can discuss how substances might impact on the effects of prescribed medication and psychological therapies you might be receiving, as well as considering the long term impact on your health and mental health. Did you know, for example, that smoking tobacco can affect how medications work?

If you want, your care coordinator can refer you to someone who may be able to offer additional support with substance use reduction, harm reduction or stopping all together.

