



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Assessments and Follow-up Services

Medical practitioners in general practice can provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients with a comprehensive health assessment every nine months.

Provided under MBS item 715 or 228, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Assessments are used to:

- provide patients over the full age spectrum with a comprehensive health check
- evaluate patient health considering physical, psychological and social wellbeing
- help medical practitioners develop suitable strategies for patients that support good health or improve their health by preventing or reducing chronic disease risk factors
- provide a pathway to allied health professional follow-up services to reduce key chronic disease risk factors.

Health assessment patient eligibility

For the purpose of MBS item 715 or 228, a patient is an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person if they identify, or their parent or carer identifies them, as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent.

The health assessments are available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients in these life stages:

- children aged 0 to 14
- adults aged 15 to 54
- older people aged 55 and over.

In-patients of hospitals and residents of aged care facilities are not eligible for MBS item 715 or 228.

Health assessment practitioner eligibility

Under MBS item 715 or 228, medical practitioners are eligible to perform an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Assessment. Consultant physicians and specialists are not eligible to claim these items.

The health assessment should generally be performed by the patient's usual medical practitioner (or another medical practitioner in the same practice) who has provided most of the primary healthcare services to the patient in the last 12 months and/or is likely to provide most of the primary healthcare services to the patient over the next 12 months.

The medical practitioner may only undertake the health assessment after the patient, their parent or carer has been given an explanation about what is involved and has given their consent.

A practice nurse, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner or an Aboriginal health worker can assist the medical practitioner in the information collection stage of the health assessment and provide patients with information about recommended interventions at the direction of the medical practitioner.

Components of the health assessment

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Assessment includes an assessment of the patient's health, including their physical, psychological and social wellbeing. It also assesses what preventive healthcare, education and other assistance should be offered to the patient to improve their health and wellbeing. It complements existing services already undertaken by a range of healthcare providers.

The health assessment must include:

- information collection, including taking a patient history and undertaking examinations and investigations as required
- making an overall assessment of the patient
- recommending appropriate interventions
- providing advice and information to the patient
- keeping a record of the health assessment, and offering the patient a written report about the health assessment, with recommendations about matters covered by the health assessment
- offering the patient's carer (if any, and if the medical practitioner considers it appropriate and the patient agrees) a copy of the report or extracts of the report relevant to the carer.

As part of a health assessment, a medical practitioner may develop a simple strategy for the good health of the patient. The strategy should identify any services the patient needs and the actions the patient, or parent or carer, should take. It should be developed in collaboration with the patient, or parent or carer, and documented in the written report on the assessment that is offered to the patient, and/or patient's carer.

WWW.PRACTICEASSIST.COM.AU

WA Primary Health Alliance is supported by funding from the Australian Government under the PHN Program.

Rural Health West is funded by the Australian Government and WA Country Health Service.

Whilst all care has been taken in preparing this document, this information is a guide only and subject to change without notice.

Disclaimer: While the Australian Government has contributed funding support for this resource the information contained within it does not necessarily represent the views or policies of the Australian Government and has not been endorsed by the Australian Government.

Health assessment follow-up services

MBS item 10987 can be claimed for follow-up services provided by a practice nurse or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner on behalf of a medical practitioner.

Follow-up services provide patients with preventative healthcare and education between consultations, which can include:

- examinations and interventions indicated in the health assessment
- education on medication compliance and related monitoring
- checks on clinical progress and service access
- education, monitoring and counselling activities on lifestyle advice
- taking a medical history
- preventative advice for chronic conditions and related follow-up.

Under MBS item 10987, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients can have up to 10 follow-up services per calendar year.

Allied health follow-up services

If allied health follow-up services are required, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients can be referred for up to five services per calendar year.

The five allied health follow-up services can include:

- five of the same service type (for example physiotherapy)
- a mix of different service types (for example one dietetic, two podiatry and two physiotherapy).

For more information about referred allied health follow-up services, visit the [MBS Online](#) website.

Aboriginal HealthPathways

[HealthPathways WA](#) is an online portal that provides GPs and practice staff with information about patient assessment, management and referral pathways.

The [Aboriginal Health Initiatives](#) pathway includes information about health assessments and follow-up services, Integrated Team Care (ITC) and the Closing the Gap (CTG) PBS Co-Payment Program.

To register for login details, please email the team at healthpathways@wapha.org.au

Benefits of health assessments/follow-ups

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Assessments and follow-ups can result in improved health outcomes and the early identification of healthcare needs. For more information, refer to the [RACGP and NACCHO National Guide to a preventive health assessment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: Evidence base](#).

Providing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Assessments and follow-ups can also assist practices with meeting [PIP QI](#) and [PIP IH](#) requirements.

Health assessment QI activities

General practices can increase participation rates in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Assessments and follow-up services by embedding quality improvement (QI) activities into policies and procedures to ensure the use of:

- clinical audit tools to identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients eligible for a health assessment (for example, [CAT4-MBS715](#))
- CAT4 reports to support identification of specific target age within all eligible for an MBS item 715 (for example, children who previously would have been eligible for the Healthy Kids Check, or aged at high risk of undetected chronic conditions)
- recall systems and culturally appropriate contact methods in relation to health assessment invites.

These QI activities should form the base of a system change process where reports are collated on a regular, systematic basis to ensure continuity of care.

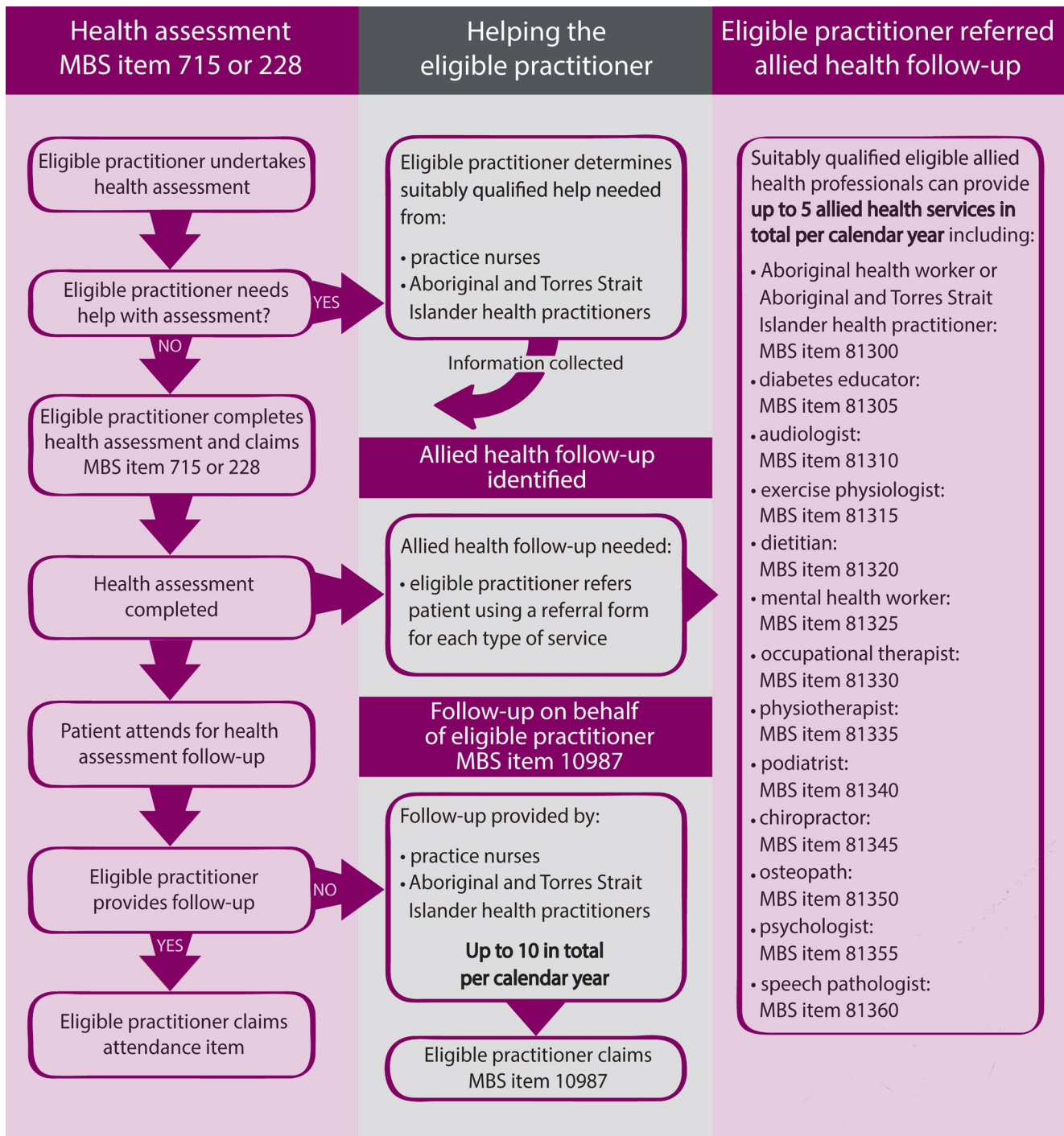
To find out more, contact [Practice Assist](#), download the [Aboriginal Health Assessment PDSA Plan](#) or visit the [Quality Improvement \(QI\) Tool Kit](#) webpage.

Further information

For more information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Assessments and follow-up services, refer to the [flowchart](#) on the next page or visit the links below:

- [Medicare Benefits Schedule \(MBS\) Item 715](#)
- [Medicare Benefits Schedule \(MBS\) Item 228](#)
- [Medicare Benefits Schedule \(MBS\) Item 10987](#)
- [RACGP - MBS Item 715 Health Checks](#)
- [RACGP - MBS Item 715 Health Check Templates](#)
- [Services Australia - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Assessments and follow-ups](#)

Flowchart for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Assessments and Follow-up Services



If you would like further information, visit mbsonline.gov.au

WWW.PRACTICEASSIST.COM.AU

WA Primary Health Alliance is supported by funding from the Australian Government under the PHN Program.

Rural Health West is funded by the Australian Government and WA Country Health Service.

Whilst all care has been taken in preparing this document, this information is a guide only and subject to change without notice.

Disclaimer: While the Australian Government has contributed funding support for this resource the information contained within it does not necessarily represent the views or policies of the Australian Government and has not been endorsed by the Australian Government.