

Questions and Answers

The questions and answers must be read in conjunction with the item descriptor and explanatory notes for Items 709 and 711 (as set out in the Medicare Benefits Schedule).

Who is eligible for this item?

The Healthy Kids Check has been introduced for all four year old children who are permanently resident in Australia or who are covered by a Reciprocal Health Care Agreement. It is to be delivered in conjunction with the four year old immunisation. In some States and Territories, the four year old immunisation is provided at 3 1/2 years. Children receiving this earlier immunisation will be eligible for the Healthy Kids Check if they are over the age of three years and six months and under the age of five years.

What is the purpose of the Healthy Kids Check?

The purpose of the Healthy Kids Check is to ensure every four year old child in Australia has a basic health check to see if they are healthy, fit and ready to learn when they start school.

Who can provide the Healthy Kids Check?

The Healthy Kids Check can be undertaken by a medical practitioner, including a GP but not including a specialist or consultant physician. The medical practitioner should generally be the patient's 'usual doctor', that is, the GP (or a GP in the same practice) who has provided the majority of services to the patient in the past 12 months, and/or is likely to provide the majority of services in the following 12 months.

The Healthy Kids Check can also be undertaken on behalf of a GP by a practice nurse. The practice nurse must be a registered or enrolled nurse who is employed by, or whose services are otherwise retained by a general practice.

A medical practitioner or nurse salaried by or contracted to an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service or health clinic can also claim for services where an exemption under subsection 19(2) of the Health Insurance Act 1973 has been granted to an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service or State/Territory Government health clinic.



Medicare Healthy Kids Check

MBS Items 709 and 711

How often can a patient receive the Healthy Kids Check?

Once only. The Healthy Kids Check is provided once, before a child enters the primary school system. Any ongoing conditions that are identified in the course of the check should be managed using existing General Practice attendance items.

A Medicare rebate is payable once only for the Healthy Kids Check for each eligible patient.

What needs to be done before the Healthy Kids Check can start (preliminary steps)?

The patient's parent/guardian must be given an explanation of the Healthy Kids Check process and its likely benefits, and must be asked by the medical practitioner or nurse whether they consent to the health check being performed. Consent must be noted on the patient record.

What does the health assessment include?

The health assessment must include each of the following components.

Information collection

The information collection component may be rendered by a nurse or other qualified health professional in accordance with accepted medical practice. Information collection must include taking a patient history (if one does not already exist) or updating an existing record. The patient record must include family and environmental factors, medical and social history, and lifestyle risk factors. Investigations should be undertaken or arranged as clinically indicated in accordance with relevant guidelines.

Assessment

The Healthy Kids Check must include an assessment of the patient's health, based on the patient history, examinations and the results of any investigations. Parents/guardians should also be encouraged to provide relevant information.

Interventions

Where appropriate, arrangements need to be put in place for referrals and follow-up of any problems identified.

Health advice

Health advice and information must be provided to the patient's parent/guardian, utilising the Department's publication **Get Set 4 Life – habits for healthy kids** and other relevant information (such as a parent-held child health record).



Is it necessary for a child to have received their four year old immunisation before they can have the Healthy Kids Check?

No. It is intended that the Healthy Kids Check be delivered in conjunction with the four year old immunisation. This does not mean that the four year old immunisation must be provided at the same time as the Healthy Kids Check. The medical practitioner or nurse providing the Check is required to document in the patient's records that:

- the four year old immunisation has already been given; or
- the four year old immunisation will be given, following the Healthy Kids Check.

However, the four year old immunisation must have been provided prior to an itemised account being issued for Medicare purposes for the Healthy Kids Check.

Does the medical practitioner or nurse providing the Healthy Kids Check also have to provide the four year old immunisation?

No. There are a range of methods for delivering the four year old immunisation, and the patient's parent/guardian may choose to have the four year old immunisation delivered in a different setting (eg. a child health centre). The medical practitioner or nurse is required to record the patient's immunisation status – ie. whether the four year old immunisation has already been provided or will be provided in the future.

Can a child who won't be immunised still receive a Healthy Kids Check?

No. In circumstances where a parent/guardian chooses not to immunise their child, the Healthy Kids Check cannot be provided as a service for which an MBS rebate may be claimed. A medical practitioner or nurse may choose to provide a service that mirrors the Healthy Kids Check, but that service would not be regarded as a Healthy Kids Check for the purpose of Medicare billing.

Is there a specific length of time for the Healthy Kids Check?

No. The Healthy Kids Check is not a time-based item.

Can another consultation be done in conjunction with the Healthy Kids Check?

No. Items 709 and 711 cannot be claimed in conjunction with another GP attendance item on the same day, except where this is clinically required. In these exceptional cases, the claim for the attendance item should be annotated to indicate that the attendance was not related to the Healthy Kids Check.

Can Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children receive the Healthy Kids Check?

Yes. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children may receive a Healthy Kids Check if they meet the patient eligibility requirements.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children under 15 years of age may also access the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Health Check (Item 708).

Is there a Medicare rebate for the Healthy Kids Check?

Yes. The MBS items are:

MBS Item 709	Attendance by a medical practitioner (including a general practitioner, but not including a specialist or consultant physician) at consulting rooms to undertake a health check for a patient who is receiving or has received their four year old immunisation. Not being an attendance on a patient in respect of whom a payment has already been made under this item or item 711. Benefits are payable on one occasion only for each eligible patient.
MBS Item 711	Service provided by a practice nurse being the provision of a health check for a patient who is receiving or has received their four year old immunisation if: (a) the service is provided on behalf of, and under the supervision of, a medical practitioner (including a general practitioner, but not including a specialist or consultant physician), and (b) the person is not an admitted patient of a hospital. Not being an attendance on a patient in respect of whom a payment has already been made under this item or item 709. Benefits are payable on one occasion only for each eligible patient.

The Medicare rebates for items 709 and 711 are paid at 100% of the schedule fee.

Can the bulk billing incentives be claimed in conjunction with the Healthy Kids Check?

Yes. Where the patient is a child under 16 years of age and the service is bulk billed, the GP can also claim a bulk billing incentive payment. For more information visit the Department of Health and Ageing's website at www9.health.gov.au/mbs.

At what stage of the health assessment can the doctor or the practice directly bill Medicare or invoice the patient's parent/guardian for the service?

The GP or the practice may only directly bill or invoice the patient when all of the components of the Healthy Kids Check have been completed and the four year old immunisation has been received.

If only one component is completed, such as the Healthy Kids Check without provision of the four year old immunisation, Item 709 or 711 will be deemed incomplete and non-claimable.

Information and resources

For more information visit the Department of Health and Ageing's website at www.health.gov.au/epc or phone the Medicare Australia provider enquiry line on 132 150.

Your local division of general practice will also be able to provide further information and support.