

Physical Health Monitoring

Information for people working with EIP services, their family and carers

Why is it important?

As part of your care and treatment plan, we sometimes think you would benefit from having conversations about your physical health and why it is important.

Many things can have a positive or negative affect on our health such as what we do in our everyday lives like exercising, eating and drinking. There are positive things we can do, like looking at our lifestyle and making healthy choices, drinking less and exercising more

One of the things that can sometimes affect physical health is taking antipsychotic medication. As with all medications, there are positive and negative effects and the most common side effects are:

Having an increased appetite

Having and appetite for high sugar or fatty foods

Weight gain

Gaining weight and eating lots of unhealthy foods can severely affect physical health. For example, it can increase our risk of developing diabetes or heart disease, which can significantly reduce the length and quality of people's lives.

We would like to support you to help identify and minimise the things that can have a negative effect on your health.

By working with us and monitoring your physical health, we are better able to

understand what will help you and support you if you are experiencing the negative side effects. We want to give you support sooner to help prevent you experiencing physical health problems.

What does it involve?

We would measure:

- Weight
- Height
- Waist and hip circumference
- Pulse and blood pressure
- Glucose and cholesterol in your blood
- Heart health using an ECG machine.

This would involve:

- Standing on scales to measure your weight
- Using a tape measure to measure your height, waist and hip circumference
- Putting a blood pressure cuff around your arm to measure your blood pressure and pulse.
- Taking blood for testing glucose and cholesterol levels
- Putting sticky patches (called electrodes) on your chest, wrists and ankles for a short period of time to record the activity of your heart.



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Monitoring physical health - How often?

We would collect all physical health measures before you start taking your medication, talk about physical health regularly as part of your care plan and then review every six months whilst you are taking antipsychotic medication.

We would measure your weight more regularly. When you first start taking your antipsychotic medication, we would measure your weight every week for 6 weeks, again at 12 weeks and then every 6 months.

We collect information about weight more regularly as weight gain is one of the most common side effects of antipsychotic medications.

Who can monitor your physical health?

- Because physical health monitoring would involve blood tests and ECGs only certain professionals can help you monitor your physical health:
- Staff you are working with in Early Intervention Services
- Your GP

What are the benefits if I decide to have my physical health monitored?

Monitoring your physical health allows health professionals to detect any changes or problems that may arise. This will enable us to give you the support and treatment you may need quickly to try and prevent physical health problems.

What are the risks if I decide I don't want my physical health monitored?

There is a possibility that you may develop physical health problems (such as heart problems and diabetes) as a result of lifestyle choices and medication side effects (such as increased appetite). If unmonitored and untreated these can have a significant impact on your physical health and wellbeing.

