

Initial Health Assessment (IHA)

Looked after Children's Team [Information for carers](#)

Why is a medical meeting needed?

When a child or young person comes into care they will have an Initial Health Assessment (IHA). It is a legal requirement for all children in care to be offered a visit with a looked after children's doctor within 28 days.

This is offered to make sure their health needs are being met and to see if there are other health services that might help them lead a healthy life.

The meeting is a chance for you to talk to a doctor about any physical or mental health concerns. You can also ask any questions you might have about the health of the young person in your care.

What happens at the medical?

You will meet a children's doctor from the looked after children's team. They will ask you questions about:

- the child or young person's physical health
- their mental health
- how things are going in the placement
- day-to-day life.

They will talk to you about general things such as the child's:

- interests and hobbies
- development
- behaviour
- friendships
- sleep
- diet and exercise
- past medical history
- family history
- school

The doctor can also answer any questions you or the child might have on other health matters such as:

- skin or hair care
- toileting
- relationships and sexual health
- smoking, vaping, alcohol. and drugs

Following the discussion, the doctor will offer a medical examination.

This might include:

- measuring the child's height and weight
- listening to their heart and lungs
- checking their muscles and movement
- looking in their ears and eyes
- pressing on their tummy

It is unlikely they will need any blood tests

How long will it last?

The appointment will usually last an hour.

Who should attend?

Usually the child attends with their carer. The social worker will be invited. After discussion with the medical team, birth parents may also be invited.

What happens after the IHA?

At the end of the appointment, the doctor will make a health plan. This might include things like:

- arranging a dental appointment
- organising further tests
- referring the child to other medical services.

Keeping the information private (confidentiality)

The doctor will write a report documenting your discussions and any findings.

It is important that information is shared between professionals involved in the child's care. The report will be sent to the:

- GP
- social worker
- health visitor
- looked after children's nurses

Will they need another medical?

You will be offered a health review by a nurse from the looked after children's team in one year.

What should I do to prepare?

The child will be offered a review by a health visitor in six months if they are under five years. They will be offered a review with a nurse from the looked after children's team in one year if they are over five years.

What should we do to prepare?

You don't need to do anything to prepare for the meeting. You might want to think about any questions you may wish to ask the doctor. Don't worry if you can't think of any. If you have a red book, it may be helpful to bring it with you.

Contact details:

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