



Healthy Blood
Pressure



Stop Smoking



Safe Drinking



Healthy Mind



Healthy Weight

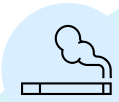
Vital 5 check

A guide for South East London Primary Care (Adult)

Key messages

1. The Vital 5 are five of the most important things we can change to improve our health
2. A Vital 5 Check helps people discover their Vital 5 results and learn how to stay healthier for longer
3. This guide can be used by anyone, clinical or non-clinical
4. You can use just one page, but ideally all 5 connected areas should be covered

Always work within your knowledge and competency



Stop Smoking

Stopping smoking is one of the single most important changes anyone can make

Smoking harms both physical and mental health



Just ask
Just asking one question can motivate change
Very brief advice works!

The Vital 5 check has been specifically designed to reach communities living with deprivation

For patients from cultures where abstinence is the norm, it can be more difficult to discuss alcohol openly



Safe Drinking

Even providing simple alcohol advice can result in significantly reduced drinking and health improvement



Healthcare is unfair
For people from ethnic minority backgrounds and lower socioeconomic groups, we know less about their V5 and so are less likely to offer help



What are the Vital 5
They are 5 of the most important things we can change to improve our health

Why the Vital 5 are important

Checking the Vital 5 helps to get a sense of someone's overall health and wellbeing



Interconnected
Vital 5 are all linked: for example, people with mental illness have higher rates of high blood pressure, smoking and living with obesity

High blood pressure is the leading cause of early death in SEL (and also of heart disease, stroke, kidney disease and dementia)



Healthy Blood Pressure

Black African or Caribbean patients are more likely to have high blood pressure, and less likely to have it well controlled



Healthy Mind

Mental health problems worsen physical health problems and vice versa

Mental health problems are very common (affecting one in four each year)

Patients from some cultures may find it more of a challenge to discuss mental health openly

Most people welcome being asked about their mental health



Healthy Weight

Around two thirds of adults in SEL are overweight or living with obesity, and this is increasing

Black ethnic groups in SEL have the highest levels of living with obesity

Younger people
Ages 35 to 55 years are when the Vital 5 can have the greatest impact on longer term health. Finding a problem and acting on it is therefore especially important at these ages

Thousands across South East London (SEL) have already benefited from a Vital 5 check

Problems in all Vital 5 areas can be **reduced and often prevented** with the right support

How to use this guide

In this box on each page, we make suggestions for opening questions - these are suggestions only and may sound better if you adapt to use you own words and phrases

Opening the check

- A **positive introduction** can encourage positive change. You could ask: *“When was the last time you took some time to focus on your overall health and wellbeing?”*
- Consider sharing some of the **information** from page 2 ‘Why the Vital 5 are important’
- Share that *“thousands of people have already participated in the Vital 5 check”*
- Patients have told us that having an **open and supportive** conversation is important: thank and congratulate where appropriate; acknowledge the patient’s feelings
- Encourage the patient to have all 5 topics checked
- People have told us it is important to take away something they are familiar with. **Show them the Vital 5 patient website and text them a link** to look at later

ASK

Brief opening and/or taking measurements

**ASSESS/
ASSIST**

Explore in more detail

The questions are treatment in themselves. **Just asking** these questions can help patients move in a healthier direction

ACT

Low risk/ concern

Offer preventative education

Share and look at the [Vital 5 patient website](#)

Medium risk/ concern

Signpost relevant service
Show sources of info

Share and look at the [Vital 5 patient website](#)

Higher risk/ concern

Refer to clinical service
Discuss with clinician

Share and look at the [Vital 5 patient website](#)

Closing the check

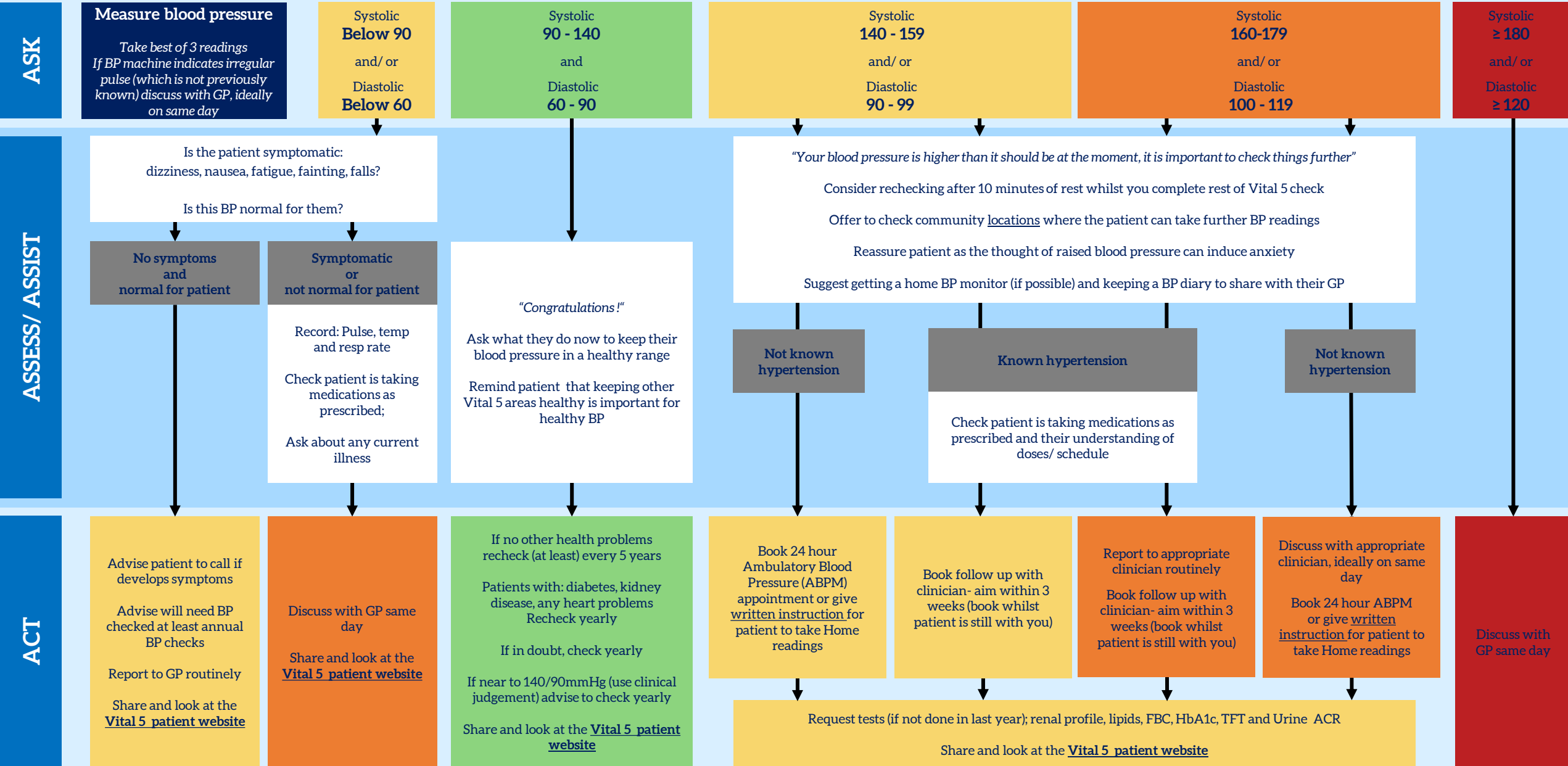
See **page 9** for details on this important final step
Please use the quick **Vital 5 template** to record important points



Healthy Blood Pressure (BP)

"Did you know that high blood pressure is one of the leading causes and death and illness in our community, and this is preventable with the right treatment?"

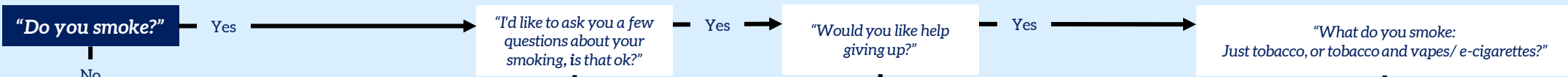
"One of the challenges is that high blood pressure does not causes symptoms, so we may not know about it until it causes a problem"



Stop Smoking

"We're seeing that more and more people in the community quit smoking"
 "Quitting is beneficial at any time, no matter how long you've smoked, but the sooner the better"

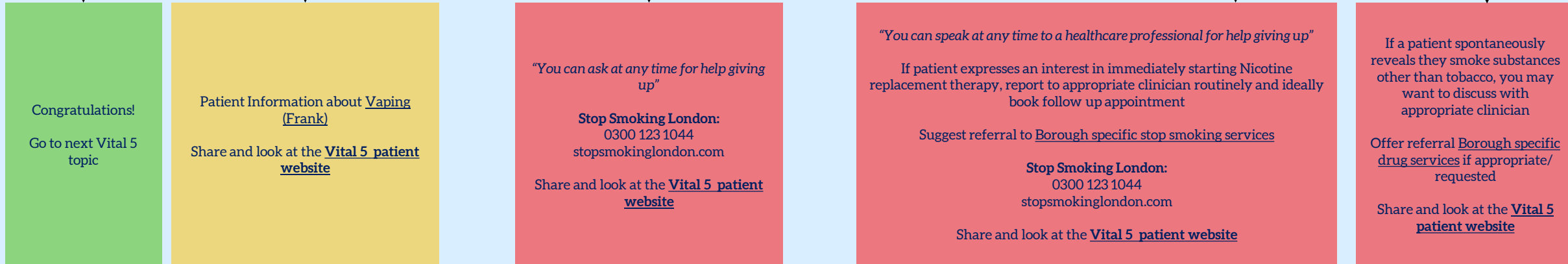
ASK



ASSESS/ ASSIST



ACT



Safe Drinking

"You don't have to be getting drunk or binge drinking to put your health at risk"
"Even a small reduction in the amount of alcohol you're drinking can make a difference to your overall health and wellbeing"

ASK

"I'd like to ask you a few questions about your alcohol intake. Is that ok?"

Yes

No

"Ok. Feel free to ask for help any time"
Consider sharing resources below

"How often do you have a drink containing alcohol?"	Score	"How many units do you drink on a typical day when you are drinking?"	Score	"How often have you had 6 or more units (female), or 8 units or more (male), on a single occasion in the last year?"	Score
Never	0	0 to 2	0	Never	0
Monthly or less	1	3 to 4	1	Less than monthly	1
2 to 4 times per month	2	5 to 6	2	Monthly	2
2 to 4 times per week	3	7 to 9	3	Weekly	3
4 or more times a week	4	10 or more	4	Daily or almost daily	4

Points to consider

- Be aware of cultural differences in drinking habits
- Be aware you may have a personal bias against overuse of alcohol
- Treat patients kindly and do not judge them when discussing alcohol
- Recommended weekly limit is 14 units- [unit calculator](#)

Totalled score			
0-4 Low Risk (go to green)	5-7 Increased Risk	8-10 Higher Risk	11-12 Possible dependance

ASSESS/ ASSIST

Thank patient for sharing and encourage to think about change

"how do you feel about your drinking, does it negatively affect your life?"

Explore understanding of problems with high alcohol use: diabetes, cancers, mental health, obesity and liver damage, sleep disturbance

Give example of one strategy a patient can employ to reduce the amount of alcohol they drink, using other people as examples

"Are you open talking to someone to help reduce your risk?"

No

Yes

ACT

Congratulate patient
Ask what they do to keep it to healthy level and acknowledge the response

"Ok. Feel free to ask for help any time"
If requested, signpost [Borough specific alcohol services](#)
Give a positive reason to reduce their alcohol
Share and look at the [Vital 5 patient website](#)

Offer appointment with relevant Healthcare Professional
If requested, signpost [Borough specific alcohol services](#)
Give a positive reason to reduce their alcohol
Share and look at the [Vital 5 patient website](#)

Suggest appointment with relevant Healthcare Professional
Offer referral to [Borough specific alcohol services](#)
Give a positive reason to reduce their alcohol
Share and look at the [Vital 5 patient website](#)

Book appointment with relevant Healthcare Professional
Suggest referral to [Borough specific alcohol services](#)
Give a positive reason to reduce their alcohol
Share and look at the [Vital 5 patient website](#)

Healthy Mind

"Wellbeing has a massive impact not just on our minds, but also on our bodies and our general wellbeing"

Assure the patient about confidentiality and that this is a safe space. Encourage the patient to be as open as possible to receive the most accurate results

ASK

"Td like to ask you a few questions about your wellbeing and mental health. Is that ok?"

Yes →

No ↓

"Ok. Feel free to ask for help any time"

Consider sharing resources as below

"Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems?"	PHQ-2		GAD-2	
	Little interest or pleasure in doing things	Feeling down, depressed or hopeless	Feeling nervous, anxious or on edge	Not being able to stop or control worrying
Not at all	0	0	0	0
Several days	1	1	1	1
More than half the days	2	2	2	2
Nearly every day	3	3	3	3

Total Scores	0-2	3-6	0-2	3-6
	Go to green		Go to green	

ASSESS/ ASSIST

Acknowledge and encourage

"Thank you for sharing, and it is good that this has been picked up today. Would you like some help?"

You could ask additional questions such as - "How do you look after yourself?" or - "What support do you have in place?"

Acknowledge any difficulties. Show relevant section of [Vital 5 website](#), including self-referral guidance to talking therapies or GP and crisis information

Inform them that there is much more help available for them if they would like to speak with someone, and give them a few options using [Vital 5 website](#), or help them book an appointment with an appropriate clinician

If they have an existing relationship with a mental health service, they may be best placed to support them

ACT

"Thank you for doing this assessment. Please reach out for support anything changes or if you need it"

"I can share some resources that you can keep for future reference."

Wellbeing resources- self accessed

[Every Mind Matters](#): expert advice and practical tips

[Good Thinking](#): Interactive Help for Londoners

[Mind](#) has a range of self help resources

Share and look at the [Vital 5 patient website](#)

Mental health concerns

Share and look at the [Vital 5 patient website](#)

"You can access urgent or routine help from our GP surgery at any time. Out of hours please call 111"

<p>Wellbeing resources - self accessed</p> <p>Every Mind Matters: expert advice and practical tips</p> <p>Good Thinking: Interactive Help for Londoners</p> <p>Mind has a range of self help resources</p> <p>Share and look at the Vital 5 patient website</p>	<p>Talking therapies - self referral</p> <p>Local talking therapies</p> <p>Share and look at the Vital 5 patient website</p>	<p>Primary care</p> <p>Some patients may wish to see their GP in the first instance. If so, help patient to book appointment with appropriate clinician</p> <p>Share and look at the Vital 5 patient website</p>
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Significant Mental health concerns

If you have significant or immediate concerns discuss with GP on same day

Crisis lines

South London and Maudsley –0800 731 2864 (Lambeth, Lewisham, Southwark)

Oxleas - 0800 330 8590 (Bexley, Bromley and Greenwich)

Share and look at the [Vital 5 patient website](#)

Healthy weight

"I know talking about weight can be sensitive, thanks for agreeing to speak to me about it"
"Most weight problems are caused by a mixture of things - what do you think could be causing issues for you?"

Calculating Body Mass index (BMI):
$$\frac{\text{Weight (kg)}}{\text{Height (m)} \times \text{Height (m)}}$$

Measure height and weight and calculate BMI

You may like to acknowledge

Healthy eating advice does not take into account culture or lifestyle habits
BMI doesn't take into account body shape or build but high BMI can have negative health consequences (like diabetes and heart disease)

ASK

BMI 18.4 and below

BMI (white ethnicity) 18.5 – 24.9

BMI (South Asian, other Asian, Middle Eastern, Black African or African-Caribbean family background) 18.5 – 22.9

BMI (white ethnicity) 25 – 29

BMI (South Asian, other Asian, Middle Eastern, Black African or African-Caribbean family background) 23 – 27.4

BMI (white ethnicity) 30 – 39.5

BMI (South Asian, other Asian, Middle Eastern, Black African or African-Caribbean family background) 27.5 – 37.5

BMI (white ethnicity) >40

BMI (South Asian, other Asian, Middle Eastern, Black African or African-Caribbean family background) > 37.5

Does the patient have additional risk?

Recent onset type 2 diabetes (T2DM) (within last 2 years)
BMI >35 with T2DM or 2 or more of: T2DM, Heart disease, Obstructive Sleep Apnoea (OSA), high cholesterol

Yes

No

ASSESS/
ASSIST

Ask about weight history: sudden or unplanned loss? Normal weight of them?

Ask about lifestyle factors such as diet and medical conditions

Further assessment

Ask about their usual diet and lifestyle
"Do you think your weight affects your health?"

Calculate QRisk3 (if applicable): If QRisk >10% and not on a statin, offer to help patient make a routine appointment with appropriate clinician
Request tests (if not done in last year); HBA1C, Cholesterol

ACT

Offer routine appointment with appropriate clinician

Share and look at the [Vital 5 patient website](#)

Congratulate patient on healthy weight

Share and look at the [Vital 5 patient website](#)

Offer routine appointment with appropriate clinician to consider referral: **Tier 2 weight loss service**

Make routine appointment with appropriate clinician to consider referral: **Tier 2 or 'Up! Up!'**

Make routine appointment with appropriate clinician to consider referral: **Tier 3**

Offer the following intervention options to the patient

- Download the free [NHS Weight Loss Plan 12 week plan](#)
- The [NHS Digital Weight Management Programme](#) for adults who have T2DM or hypertension: 12 week course
- Refer to Practice social prescribing team or health and wellbeing coach
- Silverfit physical activity for older people
- Signpost other local resources via [Mecc Link](#)

Share and look at the [Vital 5 patient website](#)

Closing and record in **Vital 5 template** (see next page for details)

Closing the check- an important final step

Congratulate and thank

Closing a health check well can really help to encourage lasting change. **Congratulate** the patient for **taking part and for doing something positive** for their long-term well-being

Summarise and highlight

Summarise the results of the check and **record them** using the Vital 5 EMIS template
Using the [Vital 5 website](#) as support, **draw attention** to results that may need addressing

Show the Vital 5 patient website

The [Vital 5 patient website](#) includes detailed information, tips and further resources
Show the patient the website and if possible read any pages of interest with them. Send (via Accurx) the link so they can look again in their own time. The website can be used as a prompt for conversation in each 'ACT' section.

Identify the patient's priorities

Ask patient **which Vital 5 area is their main concern**, and explore their options for helping this (use the [Vital 5 website](#) as support). Ask what **commitment** they could make to themselves in this area and **support** them in this

Look up on [Vital 5 website](#) the available services and agree which they'd like to consider

Use Behaviour change tips to help make lasting change

Share your priorities with the patient

Share any results that **you are concerned about**, especially if they were not identified as a patient priority. Explain why you are concerned and discuss options for addressing it

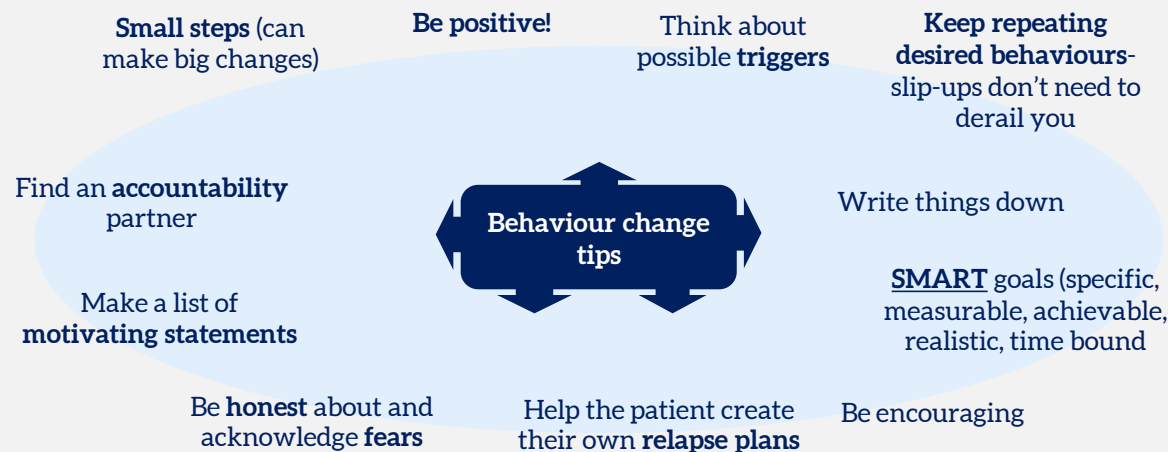
Ensure any urgent outcomes are shared and addressed

Empower the patient

Finally ask the **how will today's conversation help them be in charge of their own health?**
"What one simple thing can you commit to changing today?"

Record the information

Please use the quick **Vital 5 template** to record important points



Help closing a difficult conversation

You may find the needs of the patient feel **outside of your scope** of expertise or personal capacity. You could use the following language to safely close the conversation:

*"I think you may need to speak to a different member of the team to help you with some of the important information you're sharing with me today.
I want to make sure that you receive the best support based on what works for you personally.
Would you like me to put you in touch with someone that I think will be able to help more?"*

Then **use your judgement** to decide if you should: discuss with duty GP; help to book an appointment with relevant clinician/ service; or signpost to resources on the [Vital 5 website](#)

Making the right thing to do
the easy thing to do.