

Undertaking Health Checks in the Dioxin Health Service

Health checks and recommended examinations and investigations should be appropriate to each individual, given their concerns, any symptoms and their medical history.

This is a suggested format for the annual health check components of the Dioxin Health Service. The annual health check provides ongoing health care for people who were exposed to dioxin from the former Ivon Watkins Dow (IWD) factory in Paritutu, New Plymouth.

For information about who can provide the health check, referred services, information about the service fee, or payment queries and, please review the ***Factsheet for Health Providers – About the Dioxin Health Service***.

More information about the Dioxin Health Service is available on Health New Zealand's website: www.tewhatauora.govt.nz/dioxins. This includes information for patients.

Please do not send Health New Zealand or Health Support Services any of your patient's medical history.

This information should be kept between the patient and the health provider.

Health Check Assessment

Initial health check

If your patient is new, offer to discuss dioxins and their potential health effects, including duration and type of exposure.

Initial and subsequent health checks

Each health check should:

- Be individualised to the needs and lifestyle of each patient
- Consider any recent health concerns
- Consider if there are any symptoms relevant to **Box A**, below.

Box A: The following conditions have sufficient evidence of association with exposure to dioxin

- Hodgkin's disease
- non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- soft tissue sarcoma
- chronic lymphocytic leukemias (CLL)
- chloracne
- hypertension
- monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance

Please note that there is limited or suggestive evidence that exposure to dioxin may cause some other diseases and conditions. Please see the latest version of *Dioxins: A Technical Guide* (:

<https://www.tewhatauora.govt.nz/health-services-and-programmes/environmental-health/hazardous-substances/persistent-organic-pollutants-pops/dioxins/dioxins-a-technical-guide>

Current potential health issues from previous dioxin exposure include:

- Malaise, fatigue, weight loss, night sweats, persistent fever etc.
- Skin/soft tissue (e.g. itchiness, rashes, lumps)
- Respiratory issues
- Atypical pain
- Prostatic symptoms
- Whether the patient had or has any mental health concerns (anxiety, stress, depression, or other mild-moderate mental health issues) regarding their exposure (make referral if needed for counselling or psychiatric care).¹

If relevant, other factors to consider include:

- Reviewing any medical history, family history and current diseases or medication
- Pregnancy (or future child-bearing plans) and folate supplementation.

Consider completing the following examinations (where indicated):

- The patient's general health and lifestyle (weight/height/BMI, smoking, alcohol and/or other drug use, blood pressure, urinalysis, blood glucose) (make referral if needed)¹
- Respiratory examination and lung function (including spirometry and peak expiratory flow rate)

¹ Other specialist referral (normal referral criteria apply). Genetic advice or counselling (normal referral criteria apply).

- Skin, soft tissue, lymphatic system
- Brief neurological examination including motor, sensory function, and back and lower limb function
- Abdominal examination
- Prostate specific antigen (PSA) (following an informed discussion about the advantages and limitations of PSA screening for asymptomatic men)
- Breast or gynaecological examination if indicated
- Mental health assessment.

Review for the following screening opportunities (where indicated and update where necessary):

- Cardiovascular risk status including cholesterol and blood pressure
- Diabetes annual review ('Get Checked') (if relevant)
- HPV test (if relevant)
- Mammogram (if relevant)
- Bowel screening
- Alcohol consumption
- Review vaccinations (where indicated and update where necessary).

Refer to Health Pathways for relevant investigations indicated by standard evidence-based guidelines where necessary.

Management

Undertake appropriate management of or referral for any conditions detected. For instance, order relevant tests based on examination.

Action referral to any of the following lifestyle modifications if indicated:

- Smoking cessation
- Exercise/physical activity (e.g. green prescriptions)
- Dietary advice (e.g. practice, dietician)
- Alcohol/drug issues (e.g. brief GP intervention or referral).

Please note that copayment may be required for the tests as per the local laboratory service requirements.

Please do not send Health New Zealand or the Health Support Services any medical records.

This information should be kept between the health provider and the patient.

Additional information

- For more information about dioxins and relevant factsheets and forms <https://www.tewhatauora.govt.nz/for-health-professionals/clinical-guidance/diseases-and-conditions/dioxins-advice-for-medical-practitioners>
- Further information on dioxins and the history of our Dioxin Health Service is available here: <https://www.tewhatauora.govt.nz/health-services-and-programmes/environmental-health/hazardous-substances/persistent-organic-pollutants-pops/dioxins>
- The latest version of *Dioxins: A Technical Guide*: <https://www.tewhatauora.govt.nz/health-services-and-programmes/environmental-health/hazardous-substances/persistent-organic-pollutants-pops/dioxins/dioxins-a-technical-guide>
- Prostate cancer: <https://teaho.govt.nz/index.php/cancer-information/types-cancer/prostate-cancer>
- Diabetes: www.health.govt.nz/your-health/conditions-and-treatments/diseases-and-illnesses/diabetes
- Mental health and addiction: <https://www.tewhatauora.govt.nz/health-services-and-programmes/mental-health-and-addiction>
- Alcohol: <https://www.tewhatauora.govt.nz/health-services-and-programmes/health-promotion/programmes/alcohol>
- Drugs: <https://drugfoundation.org.nz/>
- Quitting smoking: <https://www.tewhatauora.govt.nz/for-health-professionals/clinical-guidance/specific-life-stage-health-information/child-health/well-child-tamariki-programme/te-mahau-tarearea-o-tamariki-ora/smoking-cessation>