

General Practitioners: Medical consultation before entering program

Overview of the NSW Alcohol Interlock Program

- Alcohol interlock devices are now mandatory for people convicted of high range (blood alcohol concentration of 0.15 or higher), repeat and other serious drink driving offences in NSW.
- An interlock is an electronic breath testing device linked to a vehicle's ignition system. Program participants must provide a breath sample that the interlock analyses for the presence of alcohol. If a positive sample is detected, the vehicle will not start.
- The program puts participants in contact with their GP at up to three different stages of the program to help them with their drinking behaviour:
 1. Before they enter the program
 2. During the program
 3. Towards the end of the program.

This information sheet relates to **Stage 1**, and includes the use of the Drink-less Program resources developed by the University of Sydney. The involvement of GPs is essential to support the rehabilitative opportunities of the program.

For more information on the NSW Alcohol Interlock Program, including a Fact Sheet for Medical Practitioners, visit rms.nsw.gov.au/interlock or call Service NSW on 13 22 13.

Why is this patient attending?

This patient is attending because the law requires them to attend an initial medical consultation with their GP before they can obtain an interlock licence. The type of offence they have committed is often associated with risky drinking behaviour and, in some cases, alcohol dependence. They are required to seek advice about their alcohol consumption and potential health risks.

The patient also needs you to sign a completed certificate stating that they have undergone a consultation to discuss the risks of alcohol consumption, before they can enter the program.

What is my role in this consultation?

This consultation is an opportunity for you to:

- Try to engage, motivate and support your patient to rethink their drinking
- Provide any treatment necessary
- Refer them for further assessment and treatment if needed
- Help your patient to separate drinking from driving.

How do I do this?

An important part of your role at Stage 1 is to use the *Drink-less Program resources*, which include the ten question AUDIT questionnaire to assess your patient's alcohol use.

See over the page for all the resources you will need.

Do I need to sign a form?

Yes. You need to sign the completed Medical Consultation Certificate from Roads and Maritime Services (see below). The patient needs to retain this signed certificate to apply for an interlock licence and start the program.

How do I bill for this consultation?

This consultation can be billed under Medicare because it is therapeutic. Most GPs bill this as a level C consultation (item 36). For some patients, a longer or second consultation may be needed.

Resources you will need

1. The **Drink-less Program resources** (University of Sydney) have been developed to help doctors detect and treat harmful alcohol use. The key tool is the ten question AUDIT questionnaire (Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test), which should be completed with the patient.
 - An **Alcohol Awareness Kit**, originally designed for Aboriginal Australians, includes a more visual form of the Drink-less 'Handycard', which may be useful for patients from a non-English speaking background
2. **Medical Consultation Certificate** (Roads and Maritime)
 - The patient should bring this certificate with them to the consultation. It is also available at rms.nsw.gov.au/interlock or by calling Service NSW on 13 22 13
3. **Information sheet for patients on alcohol and driving**: rms.nsw.gov.au/interlock
 - This information sheet should be given to the patient after the Drink-less process is complete.

For more information on helping a person with their drinking

- See the **Quick Reference Guide** to the Treatment of Alcohol Problems (Department of Health – federal)
- For clinical support, health professionals only can access the **NSW Drug and Alcohol Specialist Advisory Service** (DASAS) on (02) 9361 8006 or 1800 023 687
- To find the nearest specialist alcohol and drug service, phone the **Alcohol and Drug Information Service** (ADIS) on 1800 422 599 or (02) 9361 8000
- See the **standard drink sizes**.