

Practice Managers and Receptionists: 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**. The involvement of GPs is essential to support the rehabilitative opportunities of the program.

Why is this patient attending?

This patient is about to start using an interlock in their vehicle. They are required to see a doctor to discuss their alcohol use and receive advice about the risk of alcohol consumption before they enter the program.

How long should the appointment be?

Most doctors prefer a 20 minute appointment to discuss the risks of alcohol consumption. Some doctors prefer to book a second appointment. This can be cancelled if not needed.

Does a form need to be signed?

The doctor will need to sign the completed Medical Consultation Certificate from Roads and Maritime Services (see next column). The patient needs to keep this signed certificate to apply for an interlock licence and start the program.

If the doctor is short of time, can I speed things up?

Some doctors like the patient to complete the questionnaire from the Drink-less Program resources (see box below) in the waiting room. However, some patients may not be comfortable with written English. To avoid embarrassment, you can ask the person if they are happy to fill in the questionnaire, or would prefer the doctor to ask the questions.

Can this be billed to Medicare?

Yes. This visit is a therapeutic consultation so it can be billed under Medicare. Most GPs bill this as a level C consultation (item 36).

What does the doctor need for this consultation?

1. **Drink-less Program resources** (University of Sydney) including the ten question AUDIT questionnaire for the patient to complete
 - 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.