

Preparing for / What happens at a Medical Examination Meeting with Atos

When claiming benefits you may be asked to attend a meeting to have a medical examination with Atos. This medical examination will be for the Department of Work and Pension (DWP) to find out a bit more about your mental and / or physical medical condition and how your medical condition affects you in your daily life.

You will be required to attend this appointment because if you do not attend without a good reason the DWP may decide to stop your benefits.

Make sure that you are able to attend your appointment with Atos:-

You will have received a letter from Atos Healthcare informing you that an appointment has been arranged for you to attend. The date, time and location will be provided.

- If you cannot attend on the date, time or at the location offered, ring Atos on the telephone number provided in the Atos letter and ask to re-book your appointment accordingly.
- If your medical condition is such that you cannot climb steps or walk far, ring Atos on the telephone number provided and explain your restrictions.
- If you are unable to leave your home at all, Atos can arrange to attend your home instead. You will need medical evidence to support this need.

Attending the medical examination:-

Remember that you are attending an appointment to tell a Medical Professional (a Doctor, Nurse, Occupational Therapist or a Physiotherapist) how your illness affects you. In order to help you to explain your illness you may wish to:-

- Ask a family member or a close friend or a Carer to come with you to the medical. This person is allowed to attend with you and it may help you to openly discuss your health issues.
- Bring any medical evidence you have to hand to the assessor at the medical. This could be a letter from your G.P, your Psychologist, Psychiatrist, Occupational Therapist or a Medical Professional who is currently treating you for your illness and knows how it affects you.
- Take your medication with you or a list of your medication with you.

Questions and answers:-

The medical examination is to find out how your medical condition affects you in your day to day life. The medical examiner is meant to determine what you are able to do and take account of what you are unable to do.

Be clear in explaining what you are actually able to do and what you are actually restricted from doing due to your medical condition. The medical examiner questions will

focus on how you are able to manage each day and what tasks you are able to do. Questions will for example include things like:-

- What time do you get up?
- What do you do when you get up (do you have a structured day)?
- What is your typical day like?
- What do you eat (are you able to cook your own meals)?
- Do you go out socially (can you go out alone and engage with others easily)?
- Are you able to travel on the bus, train or go to familiar (like the shops) or unfamiliar places alone?
- Are you able to look after yourself by washing and keeping yourself and your personal space clean?

It is important in your answers to be clear about how your illness restricts your life. For instance if you are able to go out but are not able to travel on a bus because you find it too crowded or noisy or it causes you to become very anxious, let the medical examination know.

The Physical examination:-

If part of your medical condition or illness is due to physical problems, you may be asked to show how you are physically restricted in your movement and a physical examination may be taken.

E.g. if you are struggle to walk up stairs due to shortness of breath or lack of mobility do not force yourself to take the stairs.

Let the medical examiner know how your physical condition is restricting you both on a daily basis and at the actual medical examination. Again questions will include things relating to your ability to: -

- Mobilise - e.g. are you able to move around on level ground easily and to be able to walk a good distance of a number of meters, repeatedly without need of rest or break?
- Standing and sitting:- e.g. can you move from one seated position to another or stand for a length of time without a break?
- Reaching :- e.g. can you raise your arms or legs to get dress or to reach up above head height?
- Picking up and moving things:- e.g. can you pick up weight of 0.5 litres or less without problems?
- Manual dexterity:- e.g. can you use your hands to press a button or pick small things up? .

For a fuller list of questions see our Appendix Sheet 1: Medical Assessment Questions, attached to this fact sheet.

For further advice about your medical examination, please contact our Welfare Benefits Advice Team on 020 8763 2037. Our Advice Line is open on Tuesday from 10am to 1pm and Thursdays from 2pm to 5pm.

Further information:

Atos Healthcare: T:0800 2888 777 W: <http://www.atoshealthcare.com/>

Appendix 1: Medical assessment questions

General areas that the Atos medical examiner will look to when asking about your ability and your medical condition:-

Mental, cognitive and intellectual

- The ability to learn or understanding how to complete tasks (i.e. starting and finishing a task or tasks in an average day).
- Awareness of hazards (i.e. being safe on your own).
- Initiating and sustaining personal action (i.e. can you plan or organise your day and are you able to prioritise tasks, switch tasks and solve a problem that may arise in an average day).
- Coping with change (i.e. managing a change to a planned day or event at short notice and being able to carry on with your day despite the change).
- Getting about (i.e. are you able plan and manage a journey and to go out alone, travel on public transport and travel to places you do or do not know very well alone).
- Coping with social situations (i.e. are you able to manage going out with friends, being in a crowded social group or amounts people you do not know very well).
- Appropriateness of behaviour with other people (being able to control ones emotions and anger or aggression in a work environment).
- Make budgeting decisions.

Physical:

- Mobilising (i.e. are you able to move around on level ground easily and to be able to walk a good distance of a number of meters, repeatedly without need of rest or break).
- Standing and sitting (i.e. can you move from one seated position to another or stand for a length of time without a break).
- Reaching (i.e. can you raise your arms or legs to get dress or to reach up above head height).
- Picking up and moving things (i.e. can you pick up weight of 0.5 litres or less without problems).
- Manual dexterity (using your hands to press a button or pick small things up).
- Making self understood (being able to pass on simple messages either by speaking, writing or typing)
- Understanding communication by verbal and non verbal means (i.e. to be able to understand a simple message either by hearing, lip reading and reading large print
- Navigation and maintaining safety (i.e. going to a familiar or an unfamiliar area alone and being aware of and avoiding hazards. This can include using a reasonable aid such as a guide dog, walking stick etc).
- Controlling your bowels and bladder.
- Consciousness during waking moments.
- Can you cook a meal from scratch (i.e. peel vegetables, prepare food and time the cooking etc.).
- Eating food (i.e. being able to feed yourself alone or with assistance).
- Able to remember to attend therapy and take medication regularly.

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