



Top 10 Tips for doing a DD Health Check

- 1) Don't count on getting through the entire functions of a Health Check in one appointment. Identify and separate:
 - the current concerns;
 - the chronic disease management and,
 - the preventive functions of the Health Check.
- 2) Encourage caregivers and substitute decision makers to attend appointments; use [patient/caregiver completed tools](#) and records to improve communication.
- 3) Adapt communication to meet the needs of people with DD:
 - a) Allow extra time to communicate effectively;
 - b) See change in behaviour as a type of communication;
 - c) Think first of common conditions in persons with DD (e.g., constipation, dental pain, wax in ears, social or environmental change as a source of symptoms or behaviour change); and,
 - d) Recognize the need to assess and support capacity for consent.
 - Many people with moderate DD have stronger receptive (understanding) communication skills than expressive skills. Conversely, especially in those with mild DD, the person's expressive speech may sometimes give an impression of better comprehension than is actually the case. It is important to check that the person understands.
- 4) Recognize that serious illnesses may present in atypical ways.
- 5) If the patient has a known developmental syndrome, consult one of the many disease-specific [Health Watch Tables](#).
- 6) Proactively screen, recognizing the current low rates of preventive maneuvers.
- 7) Explore flexibility in how care is delivered; splitting up the tasks over multiple MD visits, or consider first assessment with an RN, followed by MD/NP exam.
- 8) Offer accommodations, particularly for individuals with physical disabilities:
 - Home visits or in-bed exams; or,
 - Advocate for adaptable in-office equipment (high-low exam tables, transfer boards, wedges or towels for stability, wheelchair scales, etc.).
- 9) Use a **show-tell-do** approach. Show the patient the instrument or procedure you will use, allowing them to touch/explore it; describe the steps involved, and what can be expected; then proceed. Sit at eye level.
- 10) Consider a Sensory Box that is offered to patients. This can include very simple items that may go a long way in soothing, calming or distracting a patient while they are waiting, and during care/assessment.