

PHYSICAL MONITORING REQUIREMENTS FOR PATIENTS WITH ENDURING MENTAL ILLNESS

Test or measurement	Monitoring for all patients		Monitoring for specific drugs			
	Initial health check	Annual check-up	Antipsychotics	Lithium	Valproate	Carbamazepine
Thyroid function	Yes	Yes ^a		At start and every 6 months; more often if evidence of deterioration.		
Liver function	Yes				At start and at 6 months.	At start and at 6 months.
Renal function	Yes			At start and every 6 months; more often if there is evidence of deterioration or the patient starts taking drugs such as ACE inhibitors, diuretics or NSAIDs.		Urea and electrolytes every 6 months.
Full blood count	Yes			Only if clinically indicated.	At start and at 6 months.	At start and at 6 months.
Blood (plasma) glucose	Yes	Yes	At start and at 3 months (and at 1 month if taking olanzapine or quetiapine); more often if evidence of elevated levels.			
Lipid profile	Yes	Over 40s only	At start and at 3 months; more often if evidence of elevated levels.			
Blood pressure	Yes	Yes	3 months after starting an antipsychotic.			
Prolactin	Children and adolescents only.		Risperidone only: at start and if symptoms of raised prolactin develop.			
ECG	If indicated by history or clinical picture.		At start if there are risk factors for or existing cardiovascular disease.	At start if risk factors for or existing cardiovascular disease.		
Weight and height	Yes	Yes ^b	At start and every 3 months for first year; more often if patient gains weight rapidly.	At start and when needed if the patient gains weight rapidly.	At start and at 6 months if patient gains weight rapidly.	At start and at 6 months if the patient gains weight rapidly.
Drug screening and chest x-ray	If suggested by the history or clinical picture.					
EEG, MRI, CT scans	If organic aetiology or comorbidity suspected.					
Smoking/ alcohol	Yes	Yes				
Serum levels of drug				1 week after initiation and 1 week after every dose change until levels stable, then every 3 months.	Only if there is evidence of ineffective-ness, poor adherence or toxicity.	Every 6 months ^c .

For patients on lamotrigine, do an annual health check, but no special monitoring tests are needed.

a Every 6 months for people with rapid-cycling bipolar disorder, plus thyroid antibody levels if indicated, eg by thyroid function tests.

b For children and adolescents, monthly for 6 months, then every 6 months.

c Note that therapeutic levels and toxic levels of carbamazepine are close.