

# My Symptom Check-In

A guide for patients, carers and families

*Helping you feel supported, connected, and in control*

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## Introduction

My Symptom Check-In is a simple way for your healthcare team to check how you are feeling. About every three weeks, you will receive a short message by text or email. This will ask you a few questions about your symptoms. Your answers help the practice understand how you are going and provide support if needed.

## About this guide

This guide is for you, your carer, and your family. It will help you to:

- Understand what My Symptom Check-In is and how it can support your care.
- Know what to expect when you receive symptom check-in messages.
- Feel confident in completing the check-ins.
- Understand what happens after you respond, including when someone may follow up or share helpful information.
- Feel reassured that your information is kept private and secure.

## Why was My Symptom Check-In created?

My Symptom Check-In was created to help general practices understand how patients are feeling and coping in their day-to-day lives. It allows your care team to notice changes in your health earlier. This is so support is offered at the right time.

Living with a serious, progressive illness can mean your needs change over time. That's why you are invited to take part in regular check-ins with your general practice. These check-ins are supported by the practice nurse and short My Symptom Check-In questions sent to you every three weeks. This is a simple way for your practice to make sure you're getting the support you need.

Taking part is completely **voluntary and free**. Your practice will explain how it works and ask for your permission before you start. You can stop at any time, and it won't affect the care you receive.

## What are the benefits for me?

- Regular check-ins from your general practice at planned times, helping reduce the need for urgent appointments.
- Help you to notice changes in how you manage at home.
- Support that adapts as your needs change.
- Care that is well-coordinated and focused on what matters to you.

## Are there any concerns in participating?

- You might spend a little extra time filling out the check-ins.
- Some questions may make you think about your health and wellbeing.

## What is in My Symptom Check-In?

You are asked to rate your symptoms on a scale from 0 to 10.

- 0 means you do not have the symptom at all
- 10 means the symptom is as bad as it could be.

You will also complete two short questions about:

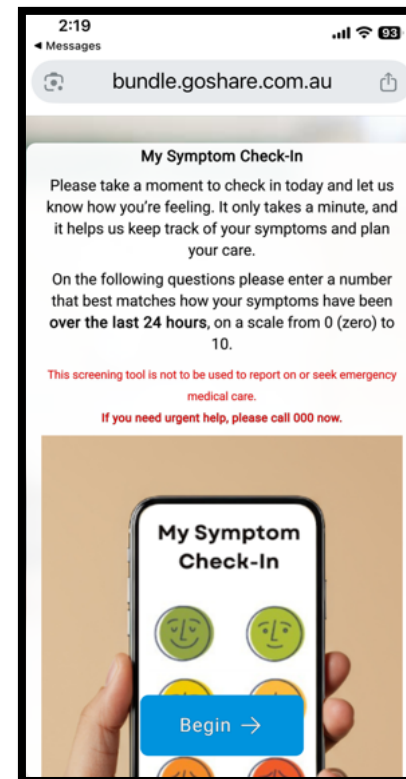
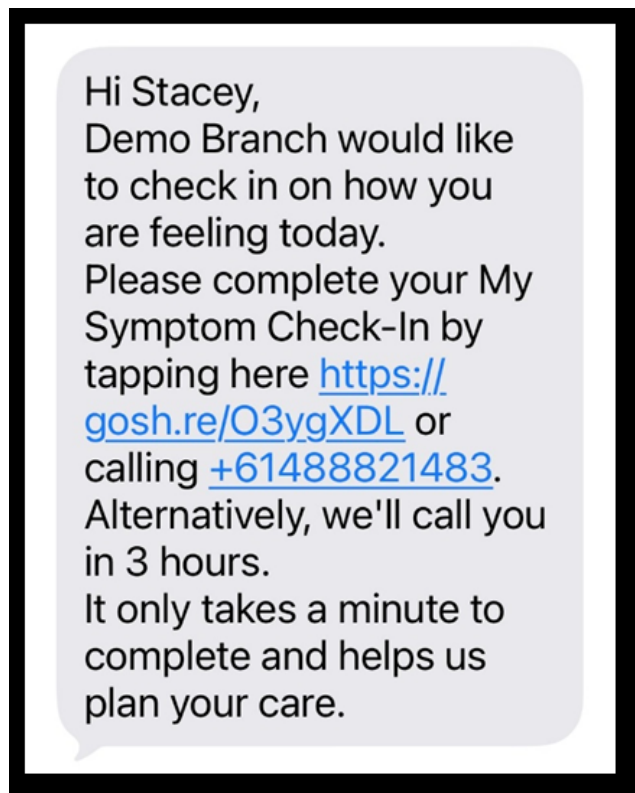
- How you usually spend your day
- Whether you have been to hospital recently.

*Table. 1. My Symptom Check-In items*

<b>How bad or severe have your symptoms been, over past 24 hours? Rate on a scale of 0 to 10.</b>		
Pain	Constipation	Depression
Tiredness	Sleep	Anxiety
Drowsiness	Appetite	Wellbeing
Nausea	Shortness of breath	
Do you spend 50% or more of the day in a bed or chair?		
Have you been to hospital or the emergency department since you last completed this form?		

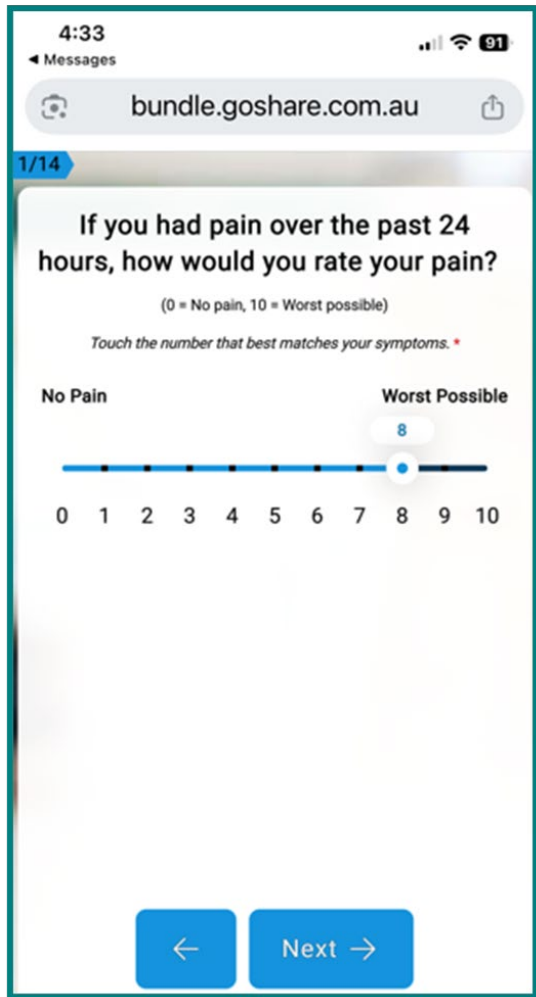
## How does My Symptom Check-In work?

- Every 3 weeks, you are asked to complete your *My Symptom Check-In*.
- The check-ins will alternate:
  - One time you will complete it at home using your phone.
  - Three weeks later, you will complete it in the practice waiting room before your appointment with the nurse or GP.
- If you cannot or do not want to use your phone, that's okay. You can just complete the check-in in the waiting room.
- If you do not respond, you will receive a phone call to help you complete the check-in over the phone.
- After you complete your check-in, you will receive links to helpful factsheets about any symptoms that are causing you problems.
- If you report severe symptoms, you are asked to complete another check-in the next day. This is to see if there has been any improvement.
- If you do not complete and submit My Symptom Check-In when sent, you will receive a phone call 3 hours later. This will ask you if you would like to complete it over the phone.



My Symptom Check-In asks you to rate how your symptoms have been over the past 24 hours:

- Below are a list of the symptoms and an image of how each symptom appears on your phone.
- To select a number, you touch a number and then touch NEXT.



### My Symptom Check-In

Patient Rates symptoms over past 24 hrs. 0 - 10

- Pain
- Tiredness
- Drowsiness
- Nausea
- Appetite
- Shortness of Breath
- Constipation
- Sleep problems
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Wellbeing (overall)

Figure 9. My Symptom Check-In content on patient phone

## What happens after I submit my scores?

Each time you submit your symptom scores, the practice nurse will get a summary of the results.

- If your scores show a problem with symptoms, the nurse will contact you based on the practice's usual process.
- You do not need to wait. If you need help, contact the practice at any time.
- The My Symptom Check-In system is not for urgent medical care. For medical emergencies, phone 000 immediately. Do not wait for the practice to contact you.
- Please note: if you submit scores later in the day, they may not be seen until the next working day.
- A full copy of your scores is stored in your patient record.
- When you are completing the scores in the practice waiting room, the practice nurse or your GP will review your screening results with you. You will still receive the symptom fact sheets, at that time.

## How does repeat screening work?

- If you rated a symptom at 7 or higher, you'll receive another check-in in 24 hours, to see if your symptoms have improved.
- These follow-up check-ins will continue every 24 hours until all your scores are below 7.
- If you do not complete one of the repeat check ins, the repeat check ins will then stop.
- Repeat checks do not affect the next date of your usual 3 weekly check-in.

## What happens at the first appointment with the practice nurse?

- You will receive an information sheet explaining the program and its benefits.
- The nurse will answer your questions and ask if you want to take part.
- Your basic information is entered into the system.
- You are shown how to complete My Symptom Check-In using your phone, email, or paper.
- You will rate your symptoms and answer three short questions.
- Your carer or family member can help you if you like.
- Appointments will be arranged for the next 3-4 months and provided to you.
- The nurse will explain how notifications and reminders work.

## What referrals and support may be suggested?

Check in and monitoring appointments at the practice can help with information and referrals to meet your current needs.

Some examples are:

- Advance care planning assistance
- Aged care service information
- Allied health referrals
- Carer support options
- Community nursing referral
- Condition and symptom information
- Equipment and mobility aid information
- Falls prevention program referral
- Medication review with your pharmacist
- Pulmonary and heart failure rehabilitation program referrals
- Respite options information
- Supportive care and palliative care referral

## How are your privacy and information protected?

We take your health and information privacy very seriously. Be reassured that:

- Your information is securely sent between you and the practice.
- It is safely stored in your medical record.
- Only your care team can see your personal information.

## Who is running the study?

This is a University of Wollongong (UOW) study about the needs of people living with serious, long-term health conditions.

By taking part, be assured that:

- Only anonymous, de-identified data (with no names or any personal details that identify you) will be used.
- Your patient care does not change.
- You can stop at any time, for any reason.

At the end of the study, you will be offered the opportunity to participate in a short survey.

This study is funded by the Australian Government and approved by a health research ethics committee.

## Questions or concerns

If you have any questions about the study: please contact Stacey Heer - University of Wollongong at [sheer@uow.edu.au](mailto:sheer@uow.edu.au)