



PREPARING FOR YOUR AUTISM ASSESSMENT **During COVID-19 Restrictions**

Who Comes To The Assessment?

Parents/Caregivers know their children best. We request that both parents/guardians participate in the assessment interview to provide information as well as to support their child. We understand that this is not always possible, but at least one guardian/caregiver must attend with the child.

What Happens During An Assessment?

The appointment takes about 3 hours. You'll meet your qualified clinician who may be a pediatrician, psychiatrist or psychologist.

There are two parts to the appointment:

1. A detailed parent interview where your clinician will ask you about your child's history and development. This part of the assessment may be booked separately, and conducted either by teleconference or a virtual platform like Zoom. This interview will take an hour or more. Please consider this interview as any other medical appointment and arrange for childcare accordingly if you are able.
2. An interview with your child/adolescent as well as an interactive observation session that uses toys and games appropriate to your child's age or level of development. This part of the assessment may be completed in-person at a later date/time. (Due to capacity restrictions we request that only ONE parent/caregiver attend with the child for this interview). If the clinician is a pediatrician, your child may have a physical exam at the end of the appointment. No medical investigations will be done at this time. If your child is pre-kindergarten age, your assessment may be completed with two clinicians (typically a pediatrician and a speech language pathologist) at the same time in the 3 hour appointment. Each clinician will take turns observing and working with your child.

Your clinician will then decide if your child needs additional assessments to help make a diagnosis and/or understand what supports your child needs. Additional assessments may include: psychology, speech-language pathology, psychiatry and/or medical evaluation. Sometimes additional appointments are booked at one of our partner clinics in the community. If these assessments have already been done in the community, we'll integrate those results into our overall evaluation. Once all assessments are finished, your child's team will meet to discuss the results.

When Do I Hear About The Results?

If no additional assessments are required, your clinician will discuss the results at the end of the child's interview appointment. If additional assessments are required, we'll book a virtual family conference with you to talk about findings, diagnosis, treatment recommendations, and how to access services. Your child does not need to attend the family conference however an adolescent may choose to attend if she/he wishes.

When Will I get My Written Report?

If your child has a positive diagnosis for autism, you'll be given a form (clinical outcome form) at the end of the appointment or at the family conference so you can get help immediately. You and your referring doctor will receive a formal report in the mail (this could take up to 6 weeks). If your clinician is a pediatrician or psychiatrist this report will be available on my eHealth website: <https://myehealth.ca/>

For a more detailed description of the autism diagnostic process please refer to page 6 and 7 of the "A Parent's Handbook: Your Guide to Autism Programs." This manual can be located at https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/managing-your-health/autism/autism_handbook_parents_guide.pdf