

System for Follow Up of Tests and Results

The practice should have an appropriate system in place for GPs to act upon clinically significant results. It is essential that all reports, clinical correspondence and results (either paper-based or the electronic equivalent) are reviewed and initialled by GPs, actioned in a timely and appropriate manner, and kept in the patient's health record. It is at the discretion of the GPs as to what is a reasonable level of follow up for each case.

RACGP 4th Edition Standards

1.5.3 *Our practice has a system for the follow up and review of tests and results.*

Assessment methods

- Document review

Surveyors will require documentary evidence of how tests and results are being reviewed by GPs, initialled and, where appropriate, acted on.

- Document review of written policies
- Interviews with GPs and practice staff

Staff and GPs will be able to describe to surveyors the system of how all results are received, reviewed, signed or initialled, sufficiently actioned in a timely manner, incorporated into the patient's health record and how patients are informed of this process.

Meeting the standards

The Practice will have a written policy describing the review and management of all results, and the system to follow up and recall patients with clinically significant results. Practice staff will follow up every test ordered as a risk management strategy. Practice staff and GPs need to understand the importance of having a system in place, with appropriate policies and procedures to lessen the possibility of a clinically significant result being missed.

Follow up action on clinically significant results will be dealt with promptly. The practice should have an appropriate system in place where GPs act upon clinically significant results. It will be the GP's decision as to the urgency of the follow up and attempts to contact patients in regards to tests and results. Follow up dates and information detailing attempts made to contact the patient should be recorded in the patient's health record.

Best practice:

- Practice staff follow up every test ordered as a risk management strategy.
- Practice staff and GPs understand the importance of having a system in place, with the appropriate policies and procedures to lessen the possibility of a clinically significant result being missed.
- The system keeps track of patients until they actually re-attend.
- There is a consistent approach between different GPs in the same practice, allowing easy cross checking of results when staff are away.