

Communicating with GPs

Every workers compensation claim requires the worker to have a Nominated Treating Doctor (NTD). A General Practitioner (GP) usually takes on this role.

Building an effective relationship with your injured worker's GP can positively assist with a safe, timely recovery and return to work for your worker.

Every GP is different, so the way you communicate with them will change depending on factors including:

- how they prefer to be contacted by employers
- how long you have been working with the GP (Workers have a right to choose their own NTD, however some employers negotiate with a local GP to provide initial treatment for their injured workers, as long as the worker agrees. Many employers have found these ongoing relationships with GPs make it easier to share information.)
- a GP's previous experience working with employers and in the workers compensation system
- and most importantly, their patient's wishes which a GP must respect. It is also important to remember that a GP will always have their patient's best interests in mind throughout their treatment.

The role of the Nominated Treating Doctor

The NTD is responsible for the ongoing management of a worker's injury. Apart from assessing, diagnosing, treating and certifying patients, the role of the NTD includes supporting the patient with their recovery at/return to work.

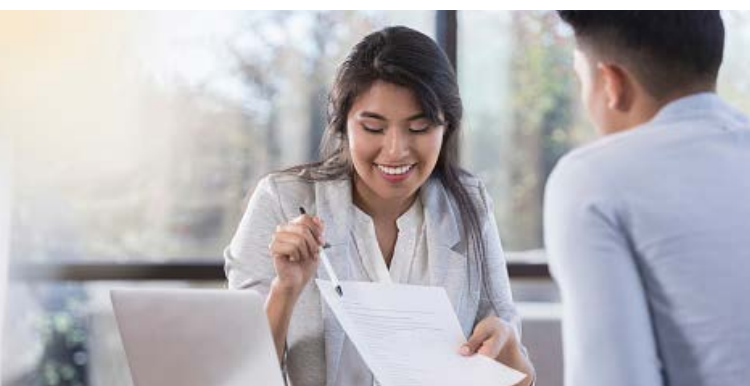
Some of the ways the NTD helps facilitate a worker's treatment and recovery from a work-related injury/illness are:

- educating them on their injury and recovery options
- recommending treatment to help in their recovery
- acting as the primary contact for treatment and recovery information for employers, insurers and other parties involved in the management of the injury
- working with the insurer and employer to develop an injury management plan
- reviewing their condition and capacity for work regularly.

The NTD is also involved in contributing to recovery at/return to work planning in collaboration with the worker and other members of the support team.*

*www.sira.nsw.gov.au

(Workers compensation guide for medical practitioners)



Your worker's recovery and return to work

How to work effectively with GPs



As the person managing workers compensation claims for your business, you will often be required to work closely with your worker's GP. Here are some suggestions to get you started:

Ask how the GP would prefer you to contact them

There are several ways you can contact a GP:

- by phone
- by email
- at a case conference/in person
- through your case manager or rehabilitation provider.

Remember: You can also speak to the GP's practice manager or receptionist to ask how best you should contact them. You can also consider providing your contact details in case they would prefer to contact you. Your case manager may also be able to guide you on how a GP prefers to be contacted, based on their experience.

Provide a list of duties you have available to your worker and their GP

The more information a GP has about your workplace and the type of work you have available, the easier it is for a GP to clearly outline what tasks their patient can do, as they recover at work. It also demonstrates a supportive workplace environment.

Remember: Making lists of duties as specific as possible will make them more useful for a GP. For example, if there is a task that involves lifting or carrying objects, include how much they weigh or even share a job description/job task analysis if you have these available.

Offer to attend a consultation to discuss your worker's recovery and return to work

By offering to attend one of their appointments, your worker will know that you are keen to work with them on their recovery and return to work. It can also give the GP an opportunity to ask questions and provide advice to you.

Remember: Your worker and/or their GP may not be comfortable with this approach and are entitled to decline the offer. By respecting their decision either way, and remaining in contact with your worker throughout their recovery journey, you'll be building trust with them.

Invite the GP to your workplace

You may want to invite the GP to your workplace so they can see how it operates. This not only builds your relationship with the GP, but means they have a good understanding of your business which will assist with making return to work plans with their patients. Extending the invitation speaks volumes, even if the GP can't take you up on the offer.

Remember: Touring your workplace means time away from the clinic for a GP, so be as flexible in the times you're available as you can.

Your strategies for working with GPs

If you have any other ideas or had success with other strategies, write them here.

e.g. Have an agreement with a local GP to provide initial treatment for our injured workers (that way they'll know us and our business already).
