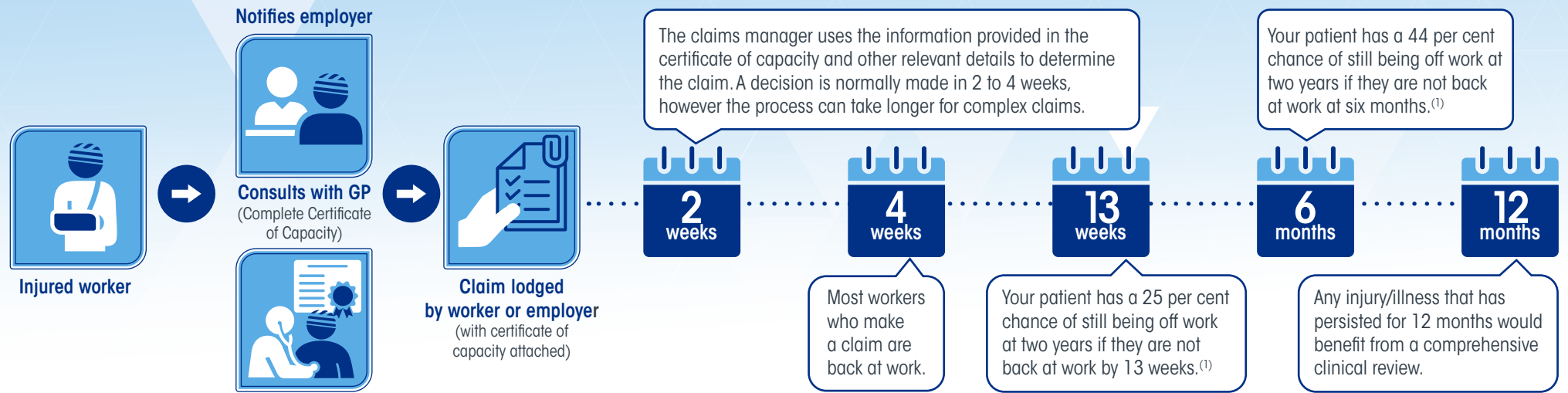


A guide for General Practitioners to manage work related injury

As a GP you play a vital role in the rehabilitation and return to work of people who have been injured at work, including promoting the health benefits of good work and advising on work capacity. This guide will help you manage the recovery pathway for an injured worker and provide key timeframes to consider within the claims process.



GPs (Medical Practitioners) statutory function

GPs have a national statutory role in certifying patient's capacity for work or rehabilitation. In most instances, a medical certificate from a Legally Qualified Medical Practitioner is required for claims (that are accepted for workers' compensation) to comply with the relevant legislation.



Case managers/Return to Work (RTW) coordinators

In most instances, a case manager or a RTW coordinator will be assigned to support your patient in coordinating and managing their rehabilitation and RTW. This may include working with you to organise case conferences to plan, organise and coordinate services and resources to support your patient's recovery and RTW.



Employers (workplaces) obligations

Employers are legally obligated to support your patient's return to safe and suitable work. This may include providing suitable or alternative duties when a worker is certified fit for work with reduced capacity.



Set a return to work date

Provide estimated timeframes and clear expectations around when your patient could reasonably be expected to RTW.

Research has consistently shown that patients who are given a RTW date by their treating health practitioner are three times more likely to RTW².



Certificate of Capacity

This certificate provides information on your patient's capacity for work, helps employers identify and plan options, and facilitates a more effective and durable RTW. It also helps guide a conversation with your patient about the health benefits of working and how they can safely stay at, or return to work.

The certificate includes:

- **Date of injury.** The date a patient says their injury or illness commenced/occurred. A specific date of injury is usually required.
- **Diagnosis.** A clear description of the condition or injury is critical to help set expectations about recovery with your patient and others involved in their care. A diagnosis from a legally qualified health provider is mandatory in most jurisdictions. A non-specific diagnosis such as a 'medical condition' or symptom description is not acceptable.
- **Treatment and Management Plan.** An outline of what's required to support your patient's recovery. This provides the best opportunity to inform employers, case managers and other treating health providers about treatment and other support services for your patient, including strategies to maximise recovery and address any barriers to RTW.
- **Information about referrals (if any).** Details about other treating health providers to inform others involved in the case.
- **Capacity Assessment.** You are required to provide a medical opinion on the worker's functional capacity and limitations. Consider both their physical and psychological function and focus on what they can do, not what they can't do. Information provided in this section assists employers to plan for RTW and identify suitable employment for your patient to safely return to or stay at work.

⁽¹⁾ Johnson D, Fry T. *Factors Affecting Return to Work after Injury: A study for the Victorian WorkCover Authority*. Melbourne: Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research; 2002. (Updated 2018)

⁽²⁾ Kosny, A; Franche, R, Cote, P, Mustard, C. Early healthcare provider communication with patients and their workplace following a lost time claim for an occupational musculoskeletal injury. *Journal of occupational rehabilitation*, March 2006, 16:1:27-39