

Why you need a regular GP

What is a GP?

A GP is your local personal doctor. If you are ill or worried about your health or the health of anyone in your family, you should go and see your local GP.

A GP is a qualified doctor trained to assess, diagnose, treat and manage any physical or mental illness for patients of all ages.

The place where you see your GP could be known as a surgery or a medical centre. GPs often work together in a small group called a practice.

What are the benefits of having a regular GP?

A regular GP will have access to your complete medical history and can ensure you receive the best possible care. If your own GP is not available, you may ask to see another GP in the same practice who will be able to access your medical history.

When you have been in hospital, your regular GP will receive information about your hospital stay and is your main point of contact when you have been discharged home.

If further treatment is required the GP will coordinate this, possibly with another member of their team such as a nurse, midwife or physiotherapist.

Seeing a regular GP helps you develop trust, so that you feel more comfortable talking openly about personal matters.

Anything you tell your GP is confidential. Your GP will ask your permission before sharing information about you or your condition with anyone, even a specialist.

How do I find a GP?

- Ask friends, family members or a local chemist
- Better Health Channel –
 - www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au
- Medicare Local
 - www.iemml.org.au/service-directory#!/
 - www.inwmml.org.au/s

How do I register with a GP?

You can telephone your selected practice and say that you are a new patient and would like to register or visit the practice in person.



Patients with a regular GP are better able to avoid long-term illnesses and disease.



Questions you might need to ask to help you choose a GP

- Is the GP easy for me to get to by public transport?
- Do the clinic's opening times suit me and how easy is it to get an appointment?
- Does the GP understand my cultural needs and speak my preferred language?
- Do they do home visits?
- Does the GP specialise in an area that I need?
- Does the practice bulk-bill or not?

How do I pay?

There are a few ways that you can pay for your visit to the GP. You will need to be registered with Medicare and have your Medicare Card with you when you visit the GP.

For more information regarding Medicare contact Department of Human Services online at <http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/subjects/medicare-services>, or telephone 132 011.

Bulk Billing

Some GPs bulk – bill services to patients, meaning the GP claims the fee direct from Medicare. The receptionist will ask you to sign a Medicare form before you leave the practice.

Private Billing

Some GPs charge a fee for services to patients, most of this fee you can claim back from Medicare.

You will need to pay the fee at the time of your appointment but can claim a part of the fee back, this is known as the Medicare benefit.

The Medicare benefit can be claimed either by:

- Registering your bank details with Medicare, you then claim at the time of your appointment and your Medicare benefit will usually be paid into your bank account the next working day.
- Claim at a Medicare Service Centre in person. You will need to take your receipt of payment with you and your Medicare card.

Concession and Health care cards

Many GPs will bulk – bill patients who have a healthcare card, Veterans card or are on a pension. Having a concession or health care card can reduce the cost of some health care services.

For further information regarding eligibility contact the Department of Human Services online at dhs.vic.gov.au/concessions, or telephone 1300 650 172