

Quick Guide to NZ Healthcare System

ONLY IF YOU ARE VERY ILL OR IF YOUR CONDITION IS VERY SERIOUS THAT YOU CANNOT WALK OR DRIVE, OR WHEN YOU HAVE A SERIOUS ACCIDENT

Go to the nearest local Accident & Medical Centre or a public hospital emergency department OR Call an ambulance if it is an emergency (e.g. when you have a heart attack) – Dial 111.



Where do I go if I am very unwell or have an accident?



IF YOU ARE NOT SERIOUSLY ILL go to a GP or a primary health service provider



Where do I go if I'm sick?

IF YOU ARE UNSURE OF WHETHER YOU NEED TO SEE A GP or GO TO HOSPITAL or NEED OTHER HEALTH ADVICE, phone Healthline

Primary Healthcare Services

The way into Primary Health Services is generally through doctors and community health centres. All people should register with a general practice or other primary health care service provider.



PRESCRIPTIONS



Most of these services are subsidised by the local District Health Board (DHB)

HEALTHLINE

Provides free 24 hour health advice on **0800 611 116**



Do I need to pay to see my family doctor/nurse?

YES - you do pay a consultation fee but the government provides funding so that GP visits are cheaper.

For most people, pharmaceutical prescriptions cost no more than \$3 per item.

It is important to register with a general practice or health centre who will enrol you in a Primary Health Organisation (PHO) so that you get access to cheaper GP visits and pharmaceuticals.

Otherwise if you are not registered with a general practice or health centre belonging to a PHO, you will pay more as a "casual patient".

It may also cost more for consultations after hours.

A small surcharge may apply for accident related GP visit. (Refer to ACC website www.acc.co.nz)

SPECIALIST ASSESSMENTS

Go to a GP for advice. Your GP will refer you to a public hospital or private specialist if further diagnosis or treatment is required.

Note:

You **don't** have to pay for **public hospital services** if you are a New Zealand citizen /resident or if you meet the criteria for funded hospital services (see eligibility criteria later on). Ask your doctor or health centre if you have any questions.

You **DO HAVE** to pay for **private specialist or private hospital care.**

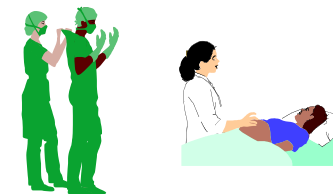
Specialist Services

Public Hospitals



Public hospitals offer emergency services, medical and surgical, maternity, operating room, elderly care, mental health service, community health services such as district nursing and diagnostic services such as Xrays, scans. Not all services are provided by public hospitals

Private Hospitals



Compiled by Sue Lim, Asian Health Support Services, Waitemata DHB. Updated: February 2009

New Zealand Healthcare System

Quick guide to NZ Healthcare Services



If you are not seriously ill and just need a general health assessment care

- Go to a GP (general practitioner) or a primary healthcare service

To find a suitable GP you could:

- ask your friends or check the telephone directory
- Ring your local Citizen Bureau Advice (CAB) or Healthline 0800 611 116
- Refer to this website <http://www.moh.govt.nz/districthealthboards>.
- Or refer to this Ministry of Health website <http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/indexmh/eligibility-healthservices-doctor>

ONLY, If you are seriously unwell or if your condition is so serious that you cannot walk or drive, or when you have an accident (especially on weekends or during after hours)

- Go to the nearest local Accident & Medical Centre or a public hospital emergency department
- Call an ambulance if it is an emergency (e.g. when you have a heart attack) – Dial 111.



If you need specialist assessment (secondary healthcare service)

- Go to a GP for advice.

Your GP will refer you to a public hospital or private specialist when further diagnosis or treatment is required. *Not all services are provided by public hospitals*

HEALTHLINE: If you are unsure of whether you need to see a GP or go to a hospital, or need other health advice

- Telephone **Healthline 0800 611 116** (a free health advice service available 24 x 7) and speak to a nurse who will advise you.



GP (General Practitioner) or Primary Healthcare Provider

In New Zealand, people should be enrolled with a primary healthcare provider that they wish to use most of the time.



Primary healthcare providers provide health check, immunisation, pregnancy care, health maintenance and so on. Primary health services are offered in local communities. They include General Practitioners (GPs)/doctors, practice nurses, midwives, dental therapists, pharmacists.



Most GPs or primary healthcare providers are part of a Primary Health Organisation (PHO). Providers who belong to a PHO will usually have funding for a greater range of services.



Primary Health Organisations

Primary Health Organisations (PHOs) are not-for-profit organisations funded through the District Health Boards. They are a group of primary health care providers (doctors, health managers, nurses and other health professionals).

People enrol in PHOs through their general practice or health centre. People enrolled in PHOs receive cheaper GP visits and for most people, pharmaceutical prescriptions cost no more than \$3 per item (apart from those aged 25-44 years enrolled in some PHOs will not receive reduced fees until 1st July 2007).

What are the benefits of enrolling with a primary health care provider that belongs to a PHO?

You get

- More attention to preventative health care
- Continuous care from one primary care provider
- Have a say in the delivery of health services
- Reduced costs especially for the low-income groups and people with poor health/chronic illness

How do I get the benefits from a PHO?

You need to enrol with a primary health provider who belongs to a PHO!

What is enrolment?

It is like joining an organisation or a club.

Can I enrol?

Most people are able to enrol with a PHO, but you need to be eligible for publicly funded health and disability services to enrol. Eligibility for non-New Zealand citizens is generally related to immigration status. You can check if you are eligible by using the Guide to Eligibility Criteria on <http://www.moh.govt.nz/eligibility>

Do I need to enrol?

- Yes if you want to access the benefits of being a part of a PHO.
- If you do enrol you will be choosing your preferred doctor
- If your doctor is a part of a PHO you may have been automatically enrolled.

What should I do?

- Check if your doctor is part of a PHO
- Check if you are enrolled
- If you are not enrolled you can get an enrolment form from your doctor
- All you have to do is complete and sign an enrolment form
- If you want to be enrolled elsewhere you have the right to change

When do I need to enrol?

- Now, if you have not done so
Note: Every three years your doctor or GP practice will ask you to confirm that you still want them to be your doctor or "primary health provider"

Do I have a choice?

You may enrol with a GP or primary health provider of your choice who belongs to a PHO. To find a suitable GP you could ask your friends, or check the telephone directory or the local Citizen Bureau Advice (CAB). You can still use other doctors or services but these are likely to cost you more.

Where do I go if I need more information about PHOs and enrolment?

You could talk to a local doctor/GP or primary health provider. You can also visit the Ministry of Health's [http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/pagesmh/5515/\\$File/PHOLeaflet.pdf](http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/pagesmh/5515/$File/PHOLeaflet.pdf) for more information.

District Health Boards

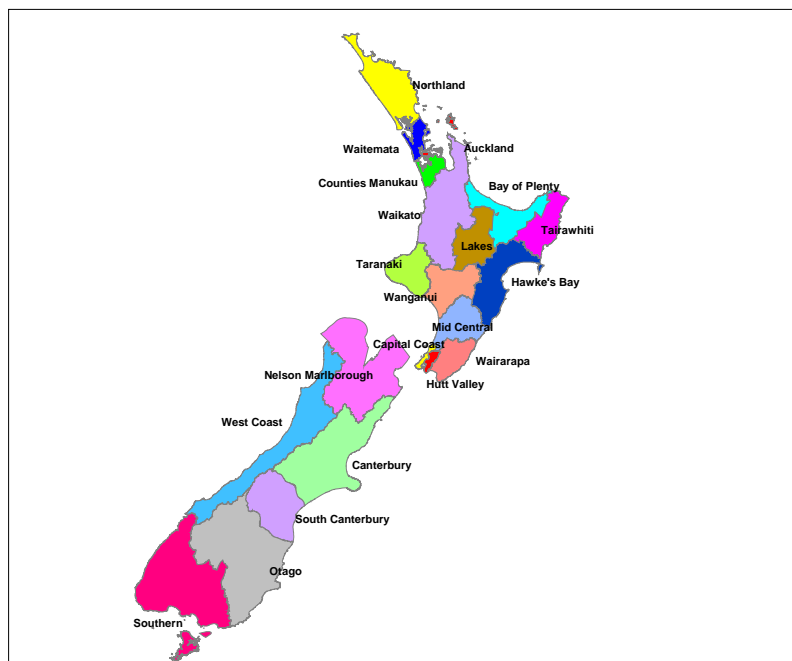
Health services for each district is organised into a District Health Board. There are 21 District Health Boards across New Zealand (also called DHBs). The government funds each DHB using taxation dollars.

The DHB is governed by an elected and appointed Board of Directors who work with management to ensure that a range of health and disability services are provided that meet the needs of the local community.

The DHB provides health services such as public hospitals, mental health, dental services and community health. The DHB is also a funder and pays community based providers such as PHOs to provide care and assistance to local communities.

The DHB is required to work with Maori, Pacific people and other cultural groups to make sure that the services offered are appropriate, accessible and acceptable to their needs.

A list of DHBs are published on the Ministry of Health's website www.moh.govt.nz



Public Hospitals

Public hospitals and associated community services are funded by a District Health Board.

Public hospitals provide a high standard of care. Most people receive emergency health care here. Hospitals include medical, surgical, maternity, operating room, elderly care, mental health service, community health services (district nursing) and diagnostic services such as x-rays, scans.



- Emergency department treats people who have a serious accident or emergency medical event. A wait up to six hours may occur.
- Outpatient clinics are by appointment only. Patients will be referred through their GPs, specialists and midwives
- The public hospital admits patients referred from the Emergency Department, a GP or a specialist
- There are waiting times for all elective health services (services which are not urgently required)
- Not all services are provided by public hospitals.

INTERPRETING SERVICES

All hospital and public health service have trained interpreters available free of charge.

Community Healthcare

Services that are provided in the community include:

- Care of children aged 0-5 years
- Midwifery antenatal and postnatal visits including home visits for mothers and new born babies at home, from birth up to 6 weeks
- Nursing care for people in their own home (e.g. dressings, injections)
- Nurses and community health workers who promote good health, prevent ill health and organise rehabilitation in the community
- Ambulance service
- Disability needs assessment service
- Personal care / home help / respite services
- School health services
- Dental services
- Community social support services

Health professionals providing services in the community include:

- Plunket nurse
- District nurse
- Public health nurse
- Allied Health professionals such as occupational therapist, physiotherapist and social worker
- Needs assessor
- Home helpers (personal care/ respite care)
- Dental therapist
- Community support worker

GP Fees (Medical Fees)

(GP fees are displayed in GP practices; published on DHB and PHO websites)

DO I NEED TO PAY TO SEE MY FAMILY DOCTOR/NURSE?

YES - you do pay a consultation fee but the government provides funding so that GP visits are cheaper.

- All consultations are partially funded by District Health Boards. Doctors and Health centres have different charges and it is best to ask your local health centre what their charges are. You could also call your local District Health Board office and ask to speak to someone in Planning and Funding about local doctors' charges.
- It is important to register with a general practice or health centre who will enrol you in a Primary Health Organisation (PHO) so that you get access to cheaper GP visits and pharmaceuticals. **Otherwise if you are not registered with a general practice or health centre belonging to a PHO, you will pay more as a "casual patient". People aged 25-44 years enrolled in some PHOs will receive access to cheaper GP visits from 1 July 2007.**
- **It may also cost more for consultations after hours.**
- **Children under 6 years old**
Usually get free health checks although some GPs do charge a small surcharge. Immunisation is also free and so are some health checks in the early years of life.
- **For older children (generally aged 6-17 years)**
The fee varies among GP practices/ health centres
- **For most adults (18 years and over)**
The fee varies among GP practices/ health centres
- **Accident-related hospital or GP visits**
A small surcharge may apply for accident related GP visits. Details of subsidy levels can be obtained from Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) website www.acc.co.nz.

ACC hospital, and some primary care fees such as GP visits and treatments from physiotherapists, osteopaths, chiropractors and acupuncturists may be fully funded or subsidised. For people who are not generally eligible for publicly funded services, ACC must have approved the treatment for it to be publicly funded."

Drugs or Medications

- For children under 6 years old are generally free
- For most people, pharmaceutical prescriptions cost no more than \$3 per item. People aged 25-44 years enrolled in some PHOs will receive access to lower cost prescriptions from 1 July 2007.
- Families who get more than 20 prescription items a year are entitled to a Pharmaceutical Subsidy Card (PSC) that could reduce their charges. Ask your pharmacist about this.
- There may be additional charge for weekend service; medicine delivery fees, or repeat prescriptions (Ask your pharmacy what the cost of the prescription is BEFORE they dispense it).



Ambulance Service

- For NZ residents, you may need to pay part of the cost of ambulance transport that are not covered by government agencies
 - For non-NZ residents, you may need to meet the full cost of ambulance transport. To check eligibility refer to the Ministry of Health (MoH) website at <http://www.moh.govt.nz/eligibility>
 - If the ambulance transport meets the criteria of “personal injury due to an accident” then the cost will be paid by Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC), refer to www.acc.co.nz
 - The cost of ambulance transport ordered by a District Health Board (DHB) to transport patients between DHBs is normally paid by the DHB
 - The cost of ambulance transport from a DHB to a private address or a non-DHB facility will be charged to the user of the service (private hire).
 - For more information on charges or ambulance private hire charges please contact your nearest regional office on 0800 ST JOHN (0800 785 646).
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Other Medical Fees

- Special Immunisations for going overseas may be chargeable
 - There is no charge for attending a public hospital if you have permanent residence or if you are a NZ citizen
 - You do have to pay full cost if you choose to go to private health providers for any care (unless you are covered by private health insurance).
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Laboratory test and x-rays

- Fees may apply for private elective treatment laboratory tests, x-rays and other diagnostic tests. You will need to pay for services in private hospitals.
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Dental Care

- Dental care is provided by private providers and must be paid for privately, except for some in-patient dental care treatment in public hospital
 - Basic dental treatment is free for children and full time students up to the age of 18.
 - In some cases those above 18 who don't have their own income may qualify for free treatment.
 - The cost of orthodontic treatment (braces/straightening teeth) is chargeable.
 - For people on low income, and experiencing acute pain (Relief of Pain service), see your Work and Income case manager for subsidised dental service for individuals
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Medical Screening Process for Refugees and Asylum seekers

- On arrival in New Zealand, quota refugees undergo compulsory medical screening at the Mangere Refugee Reception Centre, (MRRC) Mangere, Auckland.
 - Free medical screening is available for asylum seekers and family reunification refugees, (uptake of this screening service is voluntary)
 - These screening services are funded by the Ministry of Health and provided by the Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS).
 - Auckland Regional Public Health Service's medical officers complete the medical screening for quota refugees and then refer the individual on to the primary care sector , after they complete their six weeks orientation at MRRC
 - For asylum seekers (usually, when the screening process is complete, they are referred to the primary care sector)
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Eligibility Criteria for Publicly Funded Personal Health & Disability Services in New Zealand

Eligibility means the right to be considered for publicly funded services. It is not an entitlement to receive those services.

Publicly funded services may be fully funded or partly subsidised. Your health or disability service provider will advise you which services they are providing, and whether there may be a part charge for those services.

Checking the eligibility of patients is the responsibility of all health providers who administer government subsidised care. The 2003 Eligibility Direction of the Minister of Health sets out the eligibility criteria for publicly funded health and disability services in New Zealand. Only people who meet the eligibility criteria defined in the Eligibility Direction can receive publicly funded (ie, free or subsidised) health and disability services. A person may be asked to show proof that they meet the eligibility criteria.

To check if you are eligible, please use the Guide to Eligibility Criteria on www.moh.govt.nz/eligibility. This Guide will also tell you the documents you will need to show a health service provider to demonstrate you meet the eligibility criteria. What you need to show them will depend on which criteria apply to you.

What if I am not eligible?

If you are not eligible for publicly funded services, you will be asked to pay the full cost of your consultation or treatment. You may need to make this payment in advance of any non-acute services. The Government strongly recommends comprehensive health insurance for any person who is not eligible for all publicly funded health and disability services.

Conclusion and Acknowledgements

The information contained in this document is intended as guide to provide new migrants and refugees the main features of the New Zealand primary and secondary healthcare services, how to access the services and how much it will cost, and who are eligible to receive government-subsidised personal health and disability services in New Zealand. Every effort has been made to ensure that it is accurate.

However, in the event of any dispute, government policy and legislation, including the 2003 Eligibility Direction itself, will take precedence over the content of this document. You can view the 2003 Eligibility Direction and information on how it works on www.moh.govt.nz/eligibility

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This guide will be reviewed on a six monthly basis.