

Medicare card

It is recommended that you take a Medicare card with you to visit a doctor. If you do not have your own card or access to your parents' card, you need to know the number on the card. If you don't know the number, the doctor or receptionist can ring Medicare to get the number for you. They may ask you some questions and for proof of identity. To find out your Medicare number or to get more information you can call Medicare on 132 011.

When can I get my own Medicare card?

You can apply for your own Medicare card from the age of 15. You will need two forms of identification (such as a birth certificate or keycard). If you apply at a Medicare office they will give you a Medicare number over the counter and then send you the card. It can also be done by mail, but it will take about three weeks and the new card will be sent to your home/parents' address, unless you ask for it to be sent somewhere else.

How to find a doctor

- Look in the Yellow Pages under medical practitioners for a GP or local medical centre
- Ask relatives or friends
- Ask a school counsellor
- Ask a youth worker at a youth centre or youth service if they could recommend a friendly doctor

More information

- Talk to a GP.
- Call Lifeline on 131 114.
- Call Kids Help Line on 1800 55 1800.
- Call your local Community Health Centre (look under Health Services in the information pages at the front of the white pages).
- Call the Medicare information line on 132 011.
- www.healthinsite.gov.au

If these services can't help you they can usually give you the contact details of a service in your area that can.



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DOCTORS

Make Informed Choices



Visiting a doctor

Some people have a 'family doctor' or GP (general practitioner) who they have been seeing for a long time. GPs usually have surgeries or may practise at a Medical Centre. They can help you with all kinds of general health problems. Seeing a regular GP during your life is very important and can have many long-term benefits.

At some point you may need to see a specialist doctor who specialises in a particular area of health. A GP can refer you to a specialist for more help if needed.

How can doctors help?

Doctors can help:

- If you are feeling sick or physically ill
- If you are worried about things like pimples, bad breath or contraception
- If you are feeling down, unhappy, worried or anxious
- By conducting regular health checks like blood pressure, cholesterol, pap smears, checking moles and unusual marks on the skin
- By providing advice on issues such as diet, exercise, smoking or using drugs
- By giving advice if a family member or friend is sick or needs help

Whether you have a regular doctor or not it is important to tell your doctor everything about your health. Even if it seems trivial, it may be important for the doctor to know.

Your doctor may ask:

- About your general health - both physical and mental health
- If you smoke, drink alcohol or take drugs
- If you take any medication or alternative medicines
- About past health problems you have had and/or a family history of a health problem
- If you are having sex or have had sex
- When you had your last period

Confidentiality

If you visit a doctor without your parents, as a patient, you have the right to have your medical information kept confidential. There may be times when this is not possible and your parents may need to be contacted. It is important to talk to your doctor about confidentiality and to feel comfortable with the doctor you are seeing.

Taking a friend

Depending on the situation it can help to have someone with you to provide support and also help to remember what the doctor said. If you do want to take someone in with you, let the doctor know.

Payment

There are a few ways to pay for a visit to a doctor.

1. You can pay when you see the doctor. Sometimes they can give you a bill to pay later which can be sent to your house. Once you have paid the money to the doctor or received a bill, you can claim back part of the doctor's fee through Medicare. This is called a 'rebate'. You can go to any Medicare office and claim the rebate over the counter. If you have a bill from the doctor you will then need to pay the doctor the full amount of the bill.
2. Some doctors and surgeries will 'bulk bill'. This means that the doctor will use your Medicare card to charge the Government for your visit. There will be no extra charge to you (except for medication) and no notification sent to your home address. It is important to check with the doctor first to make sure they bulk bill.
3. Sometimes the doctor may ask you to pay the 'gap' between the Medicare rebate and the doctor's bill. After you pay this 'gap' your doctor will give you a bill which you can claim at any Medicare office. Medicare will send a cheque made out to the doctor to your address for the rebate amount. You then have to give this cheque to the doctor.