

English

NSW Health Care System Information Booklet



NSW Refugee
Health Service

NSW⊕HEALTH

www.refugeehealth.org.au

Are you a newly arrived refugee or migrant? This booklet gives you information about health services in NSW.

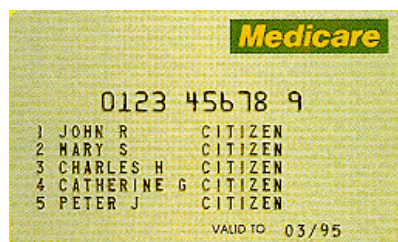
Health Cards

Medicare

Medicare is Australia's public health insurance scheme.

To get a Medicare card:

- 1 Ring **132 011** and ask for your nearest Medicare office.
- 2 Go to the Medicare office and ask for the **Welcome Kit**. The *Welcome Kit* is in Arabic, Bosnian, Chinese, Croatian, English, Greek, Indonesian, Italian, Macedonian, Serbian, Spanish and Vietnamese.
- 3 Fill out a form for your Medicare card at the office. You will need to show your passport, a second form of identification, and possibly your travel documents.



Medicare Card

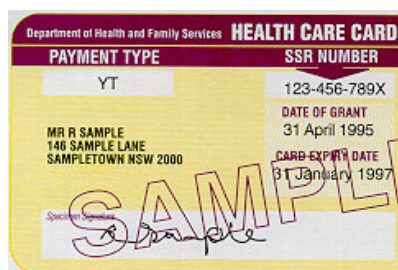
Medicare pays for all or part of the cost when you:

- visit local doctors and specialists
- are a public patient in a public hospital
- have an eye test by an optometrist
- have x-rays and pathology tests

If your doctor *bulk bills*, your visit is free because Medicare pays the doctor. If your doctor does not *bulk bill*, you pay the doctor first and then you claim some money back from Medicare.

Health Care Cards

Centrelink gives a Health Care Card or Pensioner Concession Card to people who do not earn much or any money and who receive certain benefits and pensions from the government.



Health Care Card

A Health Care Card or Pensioner Concession Card helps pay for:

- medicines prescribed by the doctor
- ambulance services
- dental treatment at public dental clinics

For more information, ring the Centrelink Multilingual Call Centre on **13 12 02**. If you speak English, you can ring Centrelink on **13 61 50**.

Remember to carry your **Medicare Card** and **Health Care Card (or Pensioner Concession Card)** with you all the time.

Professional interpreters

If you cannot speak English, always ask for a professional interpreter. It is better not to use a family member. Interpreting services are available when you visit your doctor, a hospital, a Community Health Centre or an Early Childhood Centre. These services are free and confidential.

If you need an interpreter:

- Ring and make an appointment with the doctor or health clinic.
- Tell the receptionist that you need an interpreter and they will try to get a free interpreter for you. During your visit the interpreter may be either on the telephone or in the room with you.

You can also phone the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on **13 14 50** and ask to be connected to any service.

Emergencies

Going to the emergency department

For health problems that are not serious, you should go to your local doctor.

For a medical emergency, you can go to the Emergency Department at the nearest public hospital. Emergency departments are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week and always have doctors and nurses on duty. You may need to wait for several hours in emergency departments because very ill patients must be seen first.

To find your nearest public hospital, look in the White Pages or Yellow Pages telephone directories under *Hospitals-Public*.

Ambulance

Ambulance officers can give first aid, and may take you to hospital. If you have a Health Care Card the ambulance is free. If you do not have a Health Care Card, you will have to pay.

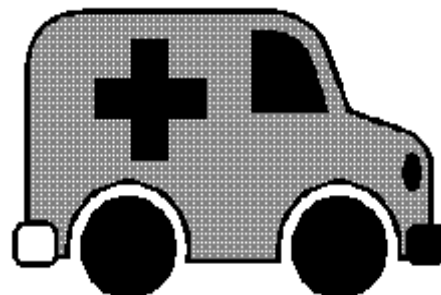
If you have a medical emergency:



- **Call 000**
- When the operator asks if you want fire, Police or Ambulance, tell them Ambulance
- Answer the operator's questions about:
 - your name
 - your telephone number
 - the emergency
 - the address of the emergency
 - the nearest cross street or landmark

If you cannot speak English:

- tell the operator which language you speak
- wait for the operator to connect you to the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) - **DO NOT HANG UP**



Looking after your health

NSW Refugee Health Service

If you came to Australia as a refugee, or seeking refugee status, you can contact the Refugee Health Service for:

- information about GPs in your area
- education about health services in NSW
- a free health assessment with a GP (in Sydney only).

Interpreters are provided free of charge. If you are going to a Refugee Health clinic you should bring a list of any medications you are taking, any medical records you have, and your Medicare card (if you have one). Phone 8778 0770.

Visiting the local doctor or General Practitioner (GP)

In Australia most people go to a local doctor or *general practitioner* (GP) when they have health problems. GP offices are called *Surgeries* or *Medical Centres*.

Ask someone from your own community if they know a GP who speaks your language. If the GP you go to does not speak your language, that doctor can get a free interpreter on the telephone.

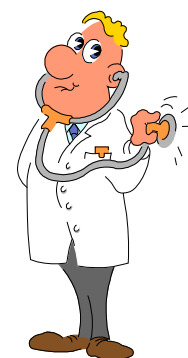
Occasionally the doctor may arrange to have an interpreter in the room with you. In this case, your appointment and the interpreter would need to be booked two weeks ahead.

When you see a GP you should ask for information about your health problem, and about how the GP will treat you. If you are unhappy with your GP, you can choose to go to another doctor.

To find your nearest GP look in the Yellow Pages telephone directory under *Medical Practitioners*. You can make an appointment over the phone for most doctors.

If you have come to Australia as a refugee you can contact the **NSW Refugee Health Service** for a health check. Interpreters are provided free of charge.

Telephone **8778 0770** to make an appointment.



Medicines

Your doctor may give you a *prescription* for medicine. You must take the prescription to a chemist (pharmacy). You can get some medicines, such as antibiotics, only if you have a prescription from a doctor. You should show the chemist your Medicare card, and Health Care Card or Pensioner Card if you have one. Most medicines cost less for people with a Health Care Card or Pensioner Card.



If you or your family need a lot of medicines in one year, ask the pharmacist about the *Safety Net*. Once you have spent a set amount on medicines, you will then pay less for any other medicines needed that year.

Seeing a specialist

Your GP may refer you to a specialist if you need more tests or treatment, for example for heart problems you might go to a *cardiologist*.

To see a specialist you must:

- have a **referral letter** from your GP
- make an appointment



Most specialists do not *bulk bill*, but some will *bulk bill* people with Health Care Cards. If your GP wants to refer you to a specialist, ask your GP how much it will cost.

If it costs too much, ask the GP to send you to a public hospital clinic. You will have to wait longer, but it is free if you have a Medicare card.

Public hospitals

Public hospitals are **free** for people with a Medicare card (when treated as a *public patient*). Public patients in public hospitals are treated by doctors and specialists from the hospital.

Public dental services

If you have a Health Care Card or Pensioner Concession Card, you can use the public dental services. All children and students under 18 years of age can also use free public dental services.

There are several public dental clinics across New South Wales. The clinics have waiting lists for people seeking treatment. If you want to go to a public dental clinic:



- Call the **Oral Health Intake and Information Service** in your area (see list below).
- Answer the questions that the staff asks about yourself and your dental problem.
- The clinic will arrange your first appointment to check your needs.

If you cannot speak English, ring **TIS 13 14 50** before you contact the **Oral Health Intake and Information Service** in your area. You will need to tell the operator the phone number you want to call (from the list below).

Oral Health Intake and Information Services:

Central Sydney - United Dental Hospital	9293 3333
South Eastern Sydney	1300 134 226
South Western Sydney	1300 559 393
Western Sydney - Westmead Hospital	9845 6766
Far Western Sydney - Nepean Hospital (Penrith area)	4734 2387
Illawarra (Wollongong area)	1300 369 651
Hunter (Newcastle area)	1300 651 625
Mid North Coast Area Health Service	1300 651 625

If you do not have a Health Care Card or Pensioner Concession Card, you have to go to a private dental clinic. To find your nearest dentist, look in the Yellow Pages under *Dentists*.

Community Health Centres

In addition to your GP, Community Health Centres can give you help with some health and welfare problems. Your nearest centre is in the White or Yellow Pages telephone directory under *Community Health Centres*.

At the Community Health Centres you can see:

- social workers or psychologists who give counselling and social support eg: for alcohol and drug problems
- specially trained community nurses who help parents and children and older people
- physiotherapists who help people after illness or injury
- speech pathologists who help children with speech problems

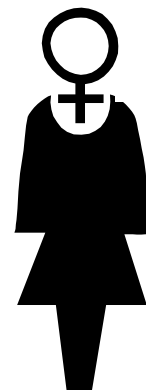
Community Health Centres often have multicultural health workers to help people from local ethnic groups. There may be a small fee for some services.

Women's health services

Women's Health Centres give information and advice to women about many things such as reproductive health, sexually transmitted infections, domestic violence, pap smears, breast checks, menstrual problems and menopause. They also have different support groups for women.

You can find your nearest centre in the White Pages under *Women's Health Centres*.

If someone who cares for you, or someone close to you, is hurting you or your family, or making you feel scared, call the **Domestic Violence Help Line** anytime on **1800 6564 63**. In Australia, domestic violence is a crime and families have the right to be protected.



Children's health services

There are a number of services that help parents with children.

At the **Early Childhood Health Centres** nurses:

- help parents to care for their babies and young children
- give advice about immunisations
- can arrange home visits



To find your nearest centre, look in the White Pages under *Early Childhood Health Centres*.



Tresillian and **Karitane** are organisations that help parents and carers with children under 5 years of age. They can help you:

- with breastfeeding
- if your baby won't sleep
- if you are upset
 - with child-care options.

Tresillian has a 24-hour parent help line. If you are living in Sydney, call **9787 0855**. If you are living outside Sydney call **1800 637 357**.

Karitane also have a 24-hour telephone help line on **9794 2300**.

Youth health services

In NSW there are health centres for people between 12 and 20 years of age. These centres also give help to parents. Youth health centres give health education, information and advice. These services are confidential. These centres are:

Corner Youth Health Service (Bankstown)	9796 8633
Fairfield Youth Health Team	8717 1717
Kirketon Road Health Centre (Kings Cross)	9360 2766
Canterbury Youth Health Service	9787 0600
Cellblock (Camperdown)	9516 2233
Western Area Adolescent Team	9881 1230
Traxside (Campbelltown)	46 252525
High Street Youth Health Centre (Harris Park)	9687 2544
The Warehouse (Penrith)	4721 8330
Community Health Adolescents in Need (Wollongong)	4226 5816



🔗 **Looking after your emotional health**

STARTTS (Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma survivors)

This service has counsellors who can help refugees and people from refugee backgrounds who have experienced torture or have suffered traumatic experiences before coming to Australia. Many staff members can speak different languages. Phone **9794 1900**.

STARTTS also has an **Early Intervention Program (E.I.P.)** which gives refugees free help with their social and emotional needs in the first twelve months after their arrival in Australia. Phone **9646 6666**.

STARTTS services are free and confidential.

Transcultural Mental Health Centre (TMHC)

This centre is for people from non-English speaking backgrounds. It gives help to people who are having emotional or mental problems. TMHC can arrange psychological checks and short-term counselling. Their staff speak over 50 languages. All services are free and confidential. You do not need a Medicare Card to use this service. GPs and health care workers can give you a referral. You can also phone TMHC on **9840 3800** or **1800 648 911**.

➤ **Mental Health Services**

If you are having social or emotional problems, you can also contact your local Mental Health Service. You can talk to psychiatrists, psychologists or social workers who can help you or your family. All services are free and confidential. To find your nearest Mental Health Service, ring your nearest public hospital or Community Health Centre, or ask your local doctor.



Health rights and responsibilities

Health workers means doctors, nurses, psychologists, counsellors and others.

Your rights

Health workers must explain to you:

- your condition or disease
- medical tests
- the treatment
- possible side-effects or risks from the treatment.



All patients have the right to:

- be treated with care, consideration and dignity
- have their beliefs and cultural and religious practices respected
- obtain other medical opinions
- see their personal medical records
- have their personal medical records kept confidential from others
- choose to withdraw consent and refuse further treatment at any time
- seek help from a health care interpreter.

Your responsibilities

You must:

- tell health workers everything about your health
- tell health workers if you use medicines, alcohol, tobacco or other drugs
- keep appointment times or inform health workers if you are unable to attend an appointment, especially if an interpreter has been booked.

How to make a complaint

In Australia, you can complain about a health service or health worker.

If you are worried about the treatment you or your family receive, discuss your worry with the health worker. If you are still not satisfied after speaking to the health worker:

- ring the hospital where you have received treatment and ask for the **Patient Support Officer** or
- ring the health centre where you received treatment and ask for the **Manager** or
- contact the **Health Care Complaints Commission on 1800 043 159 (free call)**

If you do not speak English contact TIS on 131 450