



Health

When you arrive in Australia

Soon after your arrival your caseworker or proposer will help you:

1. Register with Medicare
2. Visit a doctor for a health check up and to be sure your family's immunisations are up to date.

Medicare

Medicare is Australia's national health care system. Medicare provides access to free or subsidised medical and hospital services. To register, you will need your travel documents as proof of identity. When you register with Medicare you will be given a Medicare card. You need to take it with you every time you go to see a doctor or if you go to the hospital.



The family doctor or General Practitioner (GP)

You will want to find a 'family doctor'; someone you trust and who will get to know your family and their health needs. These doctors are called General Practitioners or GPs. They provide general medical assistance for more common illnesses and for those with chronic conditions who live at home. Unlike some countries where it is necessary to go to the hospital to see the doctor, Australian GPs usually work from houses or offices (surgeries) or clinics in the suburbs. People usually visit a doctor near to where they live. You are always free to change doctors if you are not comfortable or satisfied with the service provided.

Please advise your GP if you need an interpreter when you make an appointment. All GPs can access free interpreting at any time through the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) by calling 13 1450.

Specialist care

For treatment of special conditions, your family doctor or GP may refer you to a specialist who is an expert in that particular condition. Generally, you will need to get a referral from a doctor or hospital to be able to see a specialist.

Specialist doctors are more expensive to visit than GPs. It is often difficult to get an immediate appointment with a specialist and you may have to wait several weeks or months.

Hospitals

There are public and private hospitals in Australia. Public hospitals are funded by the government and are free to patients under Medicare. Private hospitals charge patients directly for their services. Medicare will refund a proportion of these fees but the patient must pay the difference.

Pharmacist/chemist

Pharmacists, also known as chemists, provide prescription medicines and a variety of health and beauty products. Prescription medicines can only be obtained by presenting a prescription from your doctor or GP. To receive prescription medicines at a reduced cost, show your Medicare card and Centrelink health care card to the pharmacist when paying.

Pharmacists can access free interpreting when dispensing medication by calling the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on 13 1450.

There is also medication that may be purchased from a pharmacy or chemist without a prescription from a doctor or GP. A selection of common medicines may also be purchased from supermarkets and grocery stores.

My Aged Care

My Aged Care assists older people, their families and carers to access information about aged care and services via the My Aged Care website. For more information, go to www.myagedcare.gov.au or phone My Aged Care contact centre 1800 200 422.

REMEMBER

You can use the Translating and Interpreting Service free of charge to help you with any of your medical appointments. For more information, phone 13 1450, or go to www.tisnational.gov.au/en/Non-English-speakers

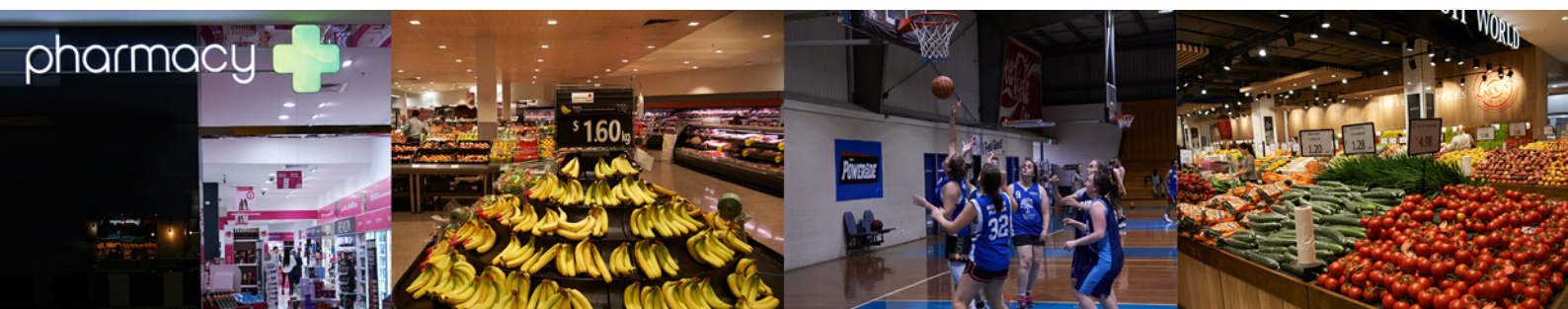
Paying for medical care

Medicare

Medicare provides free or subsidised treatment by health professionals such as doctors, specialists, optometrists and in specific circumstances dentists and other allied health practitioners. It also provides free treatment and accommodation as a public patient in a public hospital.

Private health insurance

You can pay for your own private health insurance. This will give you access to private hospitals and will cover some of the costs of treatment by doctors, including services like dentistry and optometry which are not generally covered by Medicare.



Bulk billing

Some doctors arrange for 'bulk billing' which means the doctor accepts the Medicare benefit as full payment for a service. If your doctor doesn't 'bulk bill' you will need to pay for your medical visit and apply for a partial refund from Medicare.

Scheduled fee

A standard (or 'scheduled') fee is the cost set by the government for different types of Medicare-eligible medical services. You will only be refunded the standard fee from Medicare. Some doctors will charge more than the standard fee and you must pay the difference.

Disability

For information on programs and services to support people with disability and their families and carers, go to www.dss.gov.au and search for 'Disability and Carers'.

Mental health/counselling

If you are feeling sad or depressed or are having trouble adjusting to life in Australia, you should seek counselling. Talk to your doctor and they can refer you to a psychologist or counsellor. These feelings can be very common, particularly when you have experienced big life changes. It is very important to seek help for mental health issues. They are just as serious as physical health issues and they can be treated successfully.

The Forum of Australian Services for Survivors of Torture and Trauma (FASSTT) are services for the specialist treatment of victims of trauma or torture. For more information, go to www.fasstt.org.au

These services provide mental health support for anybody living in Australia. For more information, go to:

- www.beyondblue.org.au
- www.lifeline.org.au
- www.mindhealthconnect.org.au

Staying healthy

The best way to prevent illness is to live a healthy lifestyle.

- Limit alcohol
- Don't smoke
- Exercise regularly – it is a great way to meet new people and to keep fit
- Eat healthily – Australia is a country with a large agricultural industry so the shops are filled with a variety of fresh fruit, vegetables and meat.



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Australian Government
Department of Social Services

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