

# Choosing the right care

## Self-care



Many illnesses and symptoms can be treated at home. It's also important to have a stocked up first-aid kit for minor injuries such as cuts and burns.

## Pharmacy



Pharmacists are qualified experts who provide advice and information on medicines and your health.

## healthdirect



The healthdirect helpline 1800 022 222 can assist you 24/7 with free health advice from a registered nurse.

## GP (doctor)



When you feel unwell, your GP can help you - with a broad range of health issues and throughout your life.

## Emergency (000)



If you are seriously sick or injured, call an ambulance on **triple zero** (000) or go to your nearest hospital emergency department.

For health advice 24 hours a day, call **1800 022 222** or visit [healthdirect.gov.au](http://healthdirect.gov.au)

If you need assistance in another language, call **131 450**

**Need health advice?  
Make the call**



**1800 022 222**

You can get more health information from our website  
[healthdirect.gov.au](http://healthdirect.gov.au)

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health departments

**healthdirect**

# Who are GPs and what do they do?



Information on how a GP can help you and your family live a healthy life

Your GP (general practitioner, or family doctor) is usually the first person you go to if you have a health issue. They coordinate your healthcare and can look after you throughout your life.

## What is a GP (general practitioner)?

In Australia, your family doctor is called your GP. GPs are doctors who have completed training in general medicine. They have broad knowledge and the skills to treat most of the health issues you might have through your life. Because your GP gets to know you, your family and your community, they can provide care that is suitable for you.

Your GP can also decide whether you need to see another health professional, such as a specialist.

## Things to consider when choosing a GP

When choosing a GP it's important to consider these questions:

- Do you prefer a male or a female doctor? Someone older or younger? It's important you find a GP you feel comfortable with.
- Does the practice have opening hours that suit you?
- Is it easy to travel to the practice?
- Does the practice bulk bill or will you have to pay a fee? If so, how much?
- Do the GPs do home visits or offer after-hours services?
- Does the GP speak your language?

## How to find a GP

Ask for recommendations from neighbours, friends, and family, or from other health professionals in your area.

You can also find local GPs and other health services using healthdirect's service finder on the healthdirect app or visit [healthdirect.gov.au](http://healthdirect.gov.au).

## What your GP can do for you

Your GP will give you the care best suited to your personal needs. They treat the person, not just the disease. Your GP can:

-  do regular medical check ups
-  help you plan for a family or provide contraception
-  help you if you're having a tough time
-  treat injuries and illnesses
-  manage long-term conditions
-  prescribe medicines
-  provide immunisations

## Specialist doctors

A GP may refer you to a specialist if your condition requires more attention. You can't get the full Medicare rebate if you see a specialist without a referral from your GP first. If you need to see several different health professionals, your GP will coordinate your care.

## Cost of GP consultation

When you access medical services, you can be bulk billed or given a patient account for those services. Bulk billing is when your doctor bills Medicare directly. This means you do not have any out-of-pocket expenses.

For all Medicare general enquiries phone 132 011 or visit [humanservices.gov.au/individuals/medicare](http://humanservices.gov.au/individuals/medicare).



### GP after-hours services

Some general practices offer after-hours services. Check with your GP on how to get care if you are sick or injured when the practice is closed.

If you need to find a GP or pharmacy out of hours, call 1800 022 222 for healthdirect's after hours GP helpline. A registered nurse will assess you and may offer you a call back from a GP. The GP will contact you within 15 minutes or 1 hour depending on the urgency of your health issue.

If you need assistance in another language, call 131 450.

