

FINDING A GP (A FAMILY DOCTOR)



What is a GP?

A General Practitioner (GP) is a **family doctor** who looks after people when they are physically and mentally unwell. It is a good idea to have ONE GP so that you get to know each other well.

Why do I need a GP?

A GP can:

- Help you stay in good health
- Prevent unnecessary visits to a hospital
- Provide check-ups, treatment and referrals to specialists if needed
- Give you up to date information and explanations about different health issues
- Help you to find other services that can help you



How do I find a GP?

- Ask your friends and neighbours if they can suggest a GP
- Ask your local pharmacist
- Search the Yellow Pages under “Medical Practitioner”
- Ring *WA General Practice Network* on 9472 2922 - Ask for a list of GPs in your area
- Ring or e-mail your local women’s health centre. They can give you the names of some female GPs in your local area.

Things to think about when choosing a GP

Once you have a list of GPs you are considering, visit their surgeries and think about the:

Location

Is the surgery easy for you to get to?

Sometime it is easy to see a GP closer to your work rather than home.

Opening hours

Some surgeries close at 5pm while others are open after 5pm. Some are also open on Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays. There are some **After Hours GP clinics** that are open when your GP is closed.

Home visit

Some GPs will visit you at home, if you have a serious or chronic illness. Ask the receptionist if the GP offers home visits, if this would be helpful for you.

Language spoken

If English is not your first language, you may want to see a GP who can speak your language.



Female GPs

You may want to see a GP who is a woman. Ask the receptionist if the surgery has a female GP. You can also call your local women's health centre and they can give you the names of some female GPs in your area.

Premises

Do the rooms look clean and inviting? If you take your small children, are there toys and/or an area where they can play?

Specialties

Do any of the GPs have extra qualifications or areas of expertise that may be of benefit to you? For example, if you are pregnant or if you have small children you may want to see a GP who has done extra studies in women's health and/or child health.

Information

Is there health information in the waiting room? Is it free to take home?

Payment

Ask how you can pay when you visit your GP. Some GPs will charge you less if you have a Healthcare or a Pensioner Card. Always tell the GP and the receptionist if you have a Healthcare or a Pensioner Card and always take them with you.

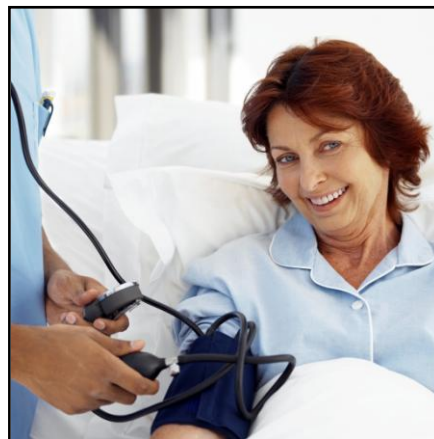
Do I need an appointment?

If you want to see a GP, you need to make an appointment. Most GPs are busy and very often it is hard to see him/her at short notice. Therefore, you need to make an appointment either by ringing the surgery or going in personally.

Can I have a longer appointment?

Tell the receptionist when booking your appointment if you would like to have a longer appointment with your GP. You may need more time especially if you are seeing a GP for the first time or want to talk about a number of issues.

Be on time for your appointment so you get to see your GP for the full amount of time. For example, if you are given an appointment at 10 o'clock in the morning try to be there by 9.55am.



Can I change my GP?

You do not have to go to the same GP if you are not happy with him or her. It is your choice to see a GP with whom you feel comfortable, whom you trust and with whom you can talk freely.

What do I need to do if I change my GP?

If you need to change your GP and go to a new GP because you are moving house for example, you can ask your GP for a copy of your health information for your new GP.

After Hours GP Clinics

You may need to see a doctor when your usual GP is closed. If your condition is serious but is not an emergency (e.g. ear ache, vomiting, sprained ankle), there are some After Hours GP clinics where you can go.

If you are unsure as to whether you should wait to see your doctor, or you should go to an After Hours GP clinic or you should go to an Emergency Department at a hospital, you can ring *Health Direct* on 1800 022 222 (free call) for 24hr medical advice. This is a free service provided by the Department of Health.

This fact sheet was produced with funding from the Drug and Alcohol Office.



For more information on this subject or any other **women's health** or **mental health issue** please contact us on (08) 9227 8122, or toll free on 1800 998 399

For information on issues specific to **Indigenous health** or for **drug and alcohol** related issues please contact us on (08) 9227 9032, or toll free on 1800 246 655

Revised June 2009

After Hours GP Clinics are listed below:



Clinic	Location	Phone Numbers	Opening Hours		
			Mon-Fri	Sat	Sun/Public Holiday
Bentley	Bentley Shopping Centre, Unit 4, 1140 Albany Highway, Bentley	9458 0585	7.00am – 10.00pm	2.00pm – 9.00pm	2.00am – 9.00pm
Fremantle	South St, Fremantle. Adjacent to Fremantle Hospital	9430 8912	6.00pm – 10.00pm	1.00pm – 9.00pm	1.00pm – 9.00pm
Joondalup	Joondalup Health Campus, Shenton Ave, Joondalup	9400 9988	7.00pm – 11.00pm	3.00pm – 11.00pm	11.00am – 11.00pm
Royal Perth	Cnr Lord & Goderich St – adjacent to Royal Perth Hospital	9202 1660 9202 1673	6.00pm – 10.00pm	12.00pm – 10.00pm	10.00am – 10.00pm
Rockingham	Rockingham/Kwinana Hospital, Elanora Drive, Cooloongup	9592 0880	7.00pm – 10.00pm	1.00pm – 9.00pm	1.00pm – 9.00pm
Armadale Health Service	3056 Albany Highway, Armadale	9391 2285	7.00pm – 10.00pm	4.00pm – 10.00pm	4.00pm – 10.00pm
Mercy Medical Centre	Ellesmere Rd. Mt Lawley	9370 4200	7.00pm – 10.00pm	Sat & Sun 2.00pm – 10.00pm	Public holiday 10.00am – 10.00pm
St. John of God Health Care	100 Murdoch Drive, Murdoch Ground floor	9366 1500	7.00pm – 10.00pm	1.00pm – 10.00pm	1.00pm – 10.00pm
St. John of God Health Care	175 Cambridge St. Subiaco	9382 9606	7.00pm – 10.00pm	1.00pm – 10.00pm	9.00am-10.00pm
Swan	Swan Districts Hospital, Eveline Road, Middle Swan	9347 5488	7.00 – 10.00pm	12.00pm – 10.00pm	12.00-10.00pm

For 24hr medical advice you can also call *Health Direct* on 1800 022 222 (free call).

Or for more information on After Hours GPs or other after hours services contact *Health Info* on 1300 135 030