

Referral to a Medical Specialist in Queensland

How can I see a Specialist?

In Australia most people go to a family doctor (also known as General Practitioner or 'GP') when they have a health problem or need a health check-up. Your GP will do the initial checks and decide if you need to see a specialist.

The GP will write a letter to refer you to a specialist doctor.

If you need to see an ophthalmologist (eye specialist) you can be referred by an optometrist or your GP.

This referral letter may need to be presented to the specialist either before or at your first appointment.

Medical specialists are usually based at public or private hospitals or private clinics and you will have the option of where you are referred. Appointments and treatment in a public hospital is free with your Medicare card. There will be a fee for appointments and treatment in private hospitals. Discuss this with your GP.

Each hospital or specialist clinic has its own process for accepting referrals based on eligibility criteria and how urgent your medical needs are. Ask your GP for more information on how your referral will be processed.

What happens after I get referred to a Specialist?

When a public hospital receives the referral from your GP, a specialist will assess how urgent your medical needs are and put you into a category from 1-3. They will send you a letter to notify you that you are now on the wait list.

- **Category 1** means urgent and they will aim to give you a specialist appointment within 30 days.
- **Category 2**, your condition is assessed as semi-urgent. They will aim to give you a specialist appointment within 90 days.
- **Category 3** means non-urgent and is the most common category to be placed in. This means They will aim to give you a specialist appointment within 365 days.

The Specialist (public and private) will communicate with you about your appointments via letters and text messages. If you do not respond to letters and text messages, you may lose your place on a wait list. This means you will need to ask your GP to send a new referral letter. If you do not understand the messages, ask your GP for help.

There can be months of waiting between seeing a GP and a Specialist.

What if my condition gets worse?

If your condition gets worse while you are on the waiting list, it is important to discuss this with your

GP. Your waitlist category may be updated when your GP provides new information.

Can I see a Specialist sooner?

If you choose to see a private Specialist you may be seen sooner than at the public hospital but this will cost a fee and you will not always be able to claim reimbursement from Medicare. If you have private health cover, it may reimburse you for some or all of the fees. If you have private health insurance you should check what your policy covers.

What happens after I see Specialist?

Once a specialist has seen you, they will decide what further treatment you need. You may need to have more tests so that they can make this decision.

What if I need surgery?

If your specialist decides you need to have surgery they will decide how quickly this needs to be done. They will place you on a surgery waiting list depending on how urgent your need is.

What if I don't have a Medicare card?

Ukrainians who have recently arrived in Australia on a temporary visa without medical insurance or Medicare, can access an ambulance and public hospitals in Queensland for free.

[More information](#)

What if I need an interpreter?

Request an interpreter when making the appointment if you need one. It is free.

What if I have urgent pain or my health condition gets worse?

- Talk to your GP
- 13 43 25 84 (13 HEALTH) - Speak with nurse on the phone for advice 24/7
- Home Doctor - Home doctor services will do home visits overnight while your GP is closed for non-emergency health concerns.
- Visit your local pharmacy
- Visit your Emergency Department at your local public hospital
- [More information](#)

Translated Health Resources

- [What to do if you feel sick in Australia](#)
- [Calling an ambulance](#)
- [Health Assessment – Information for Ukrainian arrivals \(786 visa holders\)](#)
- [About TB](#)