

Navigating the Health System – Video script – Rohingya

This video will tell you about health appointments in Australia. Soon after you arrive in Australia, a Case Manager will organise health appointments for you to check your health. A nurse may also call you to talk to you before your appointment. It is highly recommended for you and any family you travelled with, including children to attend these first health assessment appointment, even if you are not sick. You will have a lot of appointments but please try to go to these as it will help you settle in Australia!
Take any identification with you to all health appointments, such as an IMMI card or health cards or number, if you have them. Also take any health records such as immunisation statements and medications. You will need to fill in a consent form when you have your first appointment.
The first appointment will often be with a nurse who will ask lots of questions about your health and find out if you have any urgent health needs. They may organise an appointment for you at the dentist. The nurse may also check your teeth at the appointment.
An interpreter will be booked for you for the first appointments. The interpreter might be in the room or sometimes on the phone. The interpreter will keep all your information private. You can always ask for an interpreter if you need one at your health appointments. It is free for you
The first appointments are called the 'health assessment' and it is for each person who arrives in Australia, including children. It may take up to one hour or more and you may need more than one appointment. If you have a big family you might need to bring some snacks for children!
The next appointment will be with a Doctor (called a "GP") and the Doctor will start to help with more medical issues and any tests needed.
In Australia, a GP is the doctor who cares for the whole person and helps to coordinate and organise your health care. They have trained for many years and are experienced in tests, treatments and follow up.
The first appointments will include questions about your health, physical check-up, and urine and poo and organising to get your blood tested. After you get the results from your blood test, you may also get some vaccinations
I know you probably had medical checks before you came to Australia, and this was related to your visa application. It was not a general health and wellness check like this one. This medical check is not related to your visa.
These appointments will introduce you to the GP Practice so you can know how to go there in the future. The tests check your health and connect you with other health services (like optometrist).

Health workers may ask you about the past, and how you feel and how you are settling into life in Australia. There are specialised services that can help you with this stress.
You can ask questions about any tests, illnesses and treatment offered.
You might wonder why the health workers ask you to get a blood test. Blood tests help the doctor to check how healthy your body is. This might include checking for vitamins, infections and how parts of your body are working. For example your liver. The blood test can also help the doctor to know what vaccines you do or don't need.
Blood tests can be collected from different centres called 'pathology' that is sometimes next to the GP clinic. TB screening has to be done at the hospital so it is free.
Your GP will decide if you need to see a Specialist and organise a referral. A 'Referral' is a letter to a Specialist and is needed for a Specialist appointment. You may need to be on a waitlist to see a Specialist sometimes up to and even more than a year. Answer text messages and phone calls from a Specialist to stay on the waiting list and get an appointment! If you move house, make sure you update your address with your health services and Services Australia.
This health assessment is free.
The health service may ask you to come back when test results are ready. This is so that any treatment or referrals can be organised for you.
All information and health check results are private and confidential and will not be given to people who are not involved in your health care without your permission. Health workers are not allowed to discuss your medical problems with anyone, apart from other health care workers involved in your care. The information will not affect your residency status in Australia
After these first health assessment appointments you can make a booking yourself to see your GP for other health issues and checks. You can ask to see a different doctor if you like (for example if you are a woman you may want to see a female GP), but it is best to continue to see the same doctor or at least attend the same clinic so you get consistent care and they can follow up any referrals and treatments.
The health system in Australia is for you and your family - to treat sickness but also to support you staying well and answer any questions that you have.

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