

Getting Help from your General Practitioner (GP)

A General Practitioner (GP) is a doctor who has been trained to deal with all sorts of physical and mental health issues that you might have. They can diagnose, treat and give you advice about a range of physical health issues including contraception and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or personal issues such as feeling down or upset, sleeping difficulties, drug and alcohol use, or relationship problems.

Choosing a doctor

Finding a doctor can be as easy as asking your friends, family or someone at school, otherwise you will find most GPs listed in the Yellow Pages, or through some of the internet search engines listed on this pamphlet. When choosing a doctor it is important to have someone who you feel comfortable with. Some things that might help you to find the right doctor may include whether you feel more comfortable talking to a male or female, or someone that's old or young and a doctor that you can get to easily.

Making an appointment

When you ring your GP to make an appointment you will talk to a receptionist. You don't need to tell the receptionist why you want to see a GP, but you will need to give your name and tell him/her what time you want to see the doctor. Appointments with GPs normally go for 10-15 minutes. For your first appointment, or if you have many health issues that you want to talk about, it's usually a good idea to ask for a "long appointment" so you have plenty of time to talk about your concerns. If you don't feel comfortable on your own, it's OK to take someone with you to the appointment such as a friend/parent/relative.

Also, remember to ask the receptionist about costs. Some GPs will "Bulk Bill", which means you can see them for free with your Medicare

card (or if you give the number on your parents/carers card). Anyone over 15 years is eligible to have their own Medicare Card, all you need to do is fill out a form (your GP may have them, or else they are available from Chemists and Medicare offices) and provide either your parents Medicare card or two forms of ID.

Some GPs will charge you a fee, which you have to pay on the day. If you have a Medicare Card (either your own or your parents) you can get back most of this money from any Medicare Office after you fill out one of the forms provided there.

What to expect when you visit a doctor

When you go to the GP with a health or mental health problem, your GP will usually ask a range of questions to find out more about you and how you are feeling. For example, they may ask questions about your general health, your eating, exercise and sleep habits, whether you smoke or drink, how you are thinking and feeling and questions about how you are getting on at school/work and with your family and friends. This gives them a picture of you as a whole person and how each part of your life may affect your health and well-being. They will also give you a physical check-up. After this, the GP will usually tell you what they think is going on and discuss what medical treatment or other assistance might be of

HELPSEEKER #5

GENERAL PRACTITIONERS

help for you. Feel free to ask the doctor questions to explain anything that you don't understand or want to know more about.

Confidentiality

GPs are required by law to keep information about their patients confidential, which means that they won't tell anyone else about your visit, or what you talked about. However, if

they have serious concerns about your safety or the safety of someone else, they are also required by law to keep you or others safe by informing others about their concerns. Ask your GP to explain confidentiality if you're unsure of your rights. You have a right to confidentiality. If you are worried about this, you may want to change doctors.

List of Useful Services

Yellowpages

www.yellowpages.com.au

You can search under Medical Practitioners in the yellowpages, this will help you find services close to you.

Infoxchange

www.serviceseeker.com.au

This website provides an extensive directory of community support services, including GP's. This service finder helps you find services which are close to you. This service finder is not youth specific.

Get on top

www.getontop.org

This site is a youth mental health website, which has facts about mental health and the issues young people might face. It also has a help locator, which will help you find services close to you including GP's.

Child and Youth Health

<http://www.cyh.com/>

Provides useful information about a range of health issues for young people.

Kids Help Line

1800 55 1800

Trained counsellors available 24 hours.

Lifeline

13 11 14

General Counselling available 24 hours.



ORYGEN
Youth Health

Locked Bag 10
Parkville Victoria 3052
www.orygen.org.au