

# Welcome to Canada

## + HEALTH CARE IN CANADA



In Canada, everyone receives health care services no matter where they live. Provincial and territorial governments are responsible for health services, and each has a public health insurance plan. Health care is paid for by taxes, so Canadian citizens and permanent residents do not have to pay directly to receive basic medical care. There are some services that you may have to pay for directly, like going to the dentist, getting glasses, taking an ambulance or medicine that is prescribed to you by a doctor.

### YOUR HEALTH CARD

Apply for health insurance through your [province or territory's health ministry](#) as soon as you arrive in Canada. It may take up to 3 months to get coverage and receive your health card, which is your proof of health insurance coverage. If your province or territory has a waiting period before you are covered under their health insurance plan, it is a good idea to have private medical insurance to protect you and your family. Settlement service providers can help you apply for your health card. They may also help you find a family doctor.

Always carry your health card with you. You must show this card every time you get medical care. Each family member will be given their own health card.

### HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Depending on where you live, health care providers may be able to speak to you in one or both of Canada's official languages, English and French. Your settlement service provider can help you find medical services and tell you in which language or languages they are available.

If you need to receive health care information in a language other than English or French, ask your health care provider if they have access to interpreters.



## HEALTH EMERGENCIES

Depending on how serious your injury or illness is, there are different ways to get medical care. If you need non-urgent care for your physical or mental health, visit a walk-in clinic, your family doctor or a local pharmacist.

In Canada, hospital emergency departments assess how severe a patient's injury or illness is when they arrive and take care of the most serious cases first. Serious cases include, but are not limited to, people who have trouble breathing, are at risk of having a heart attack or stroke, are bleeding badly or have broken bones. This might be different than hospitals where you used to live.

If you have a health emergency, call 911 or go to your local hospital's emergency department.



## VACCINATIONS

Vaccinations or immunizations protect you from serious diseases. Ask your doctor which vaccinations you and your family need. To register your child for school, you will need to show documents that prove that your child's vaccines are up to date (a record of immunizations).

## MENTAL HEALTH IS PART OF OVERALL HEALTH

If you or someone you know feels very sad, anxious or stressed, contact your family doctor or go to a walk-in clinic for help. Your local settlement service provider may also be able to provide you with short-term counselling services.

Contact your local settlement service provider for help if you or someone you know is experiencing family or gender-based violence. This can include physical abuse, sexual abuse, financial abuse, psychological abuse or neglect of any family member, including adults and children.

## PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES AND COVID-19

For up-to-date information about COVID-19 and guidelines for protecting yourself and others, visit your local public health authority or the [Public Health Agency of Canada's website](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/covid-19).

## REFUGEE CLAIMANT OR PROTECTED PERSON

If you came to Canada as a refugee, refugee claimant or protected person, you may be covered by the [Interim Federal Health Program](https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/interim-federal-health-program). This program provides temporary coverage of basic and supplemental health services and prescription drugs to eligible clients.

## MORE INFORMATION



For more information about health care, including a video, visit [canada.ca/newcomers-healthcare](https://canada.ca/newcomers-healthcare).



To find newcomer settlement services in your area, visit [canada.ca/find-newcomer-services](https://canada.ca/find-newcomer-services).

