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## Health Care

### Available, affordable health care

- 210 public hospitals across the State
- 280 community-run health centres
- 500 early childhood centres
- 84 private hospitals

Health care is readily available in NSW and Australia offers substantially cheaper private health insurance cover for a family than the US, the UK, Germany, Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan.

NSW Health manages the State's public hospitals, community health centres offering a range of health care services, and early childhood health centres. There are also privately run hospitals and clinics.

You can search for a public or private hospital in your area on the [NSW Department of Health](#) website.

Doctors or general practitioners (GPs) are located in every town and centre to treat everyday illnesses and refer patients to specialists for additional treatment if necessary. GPs are listed under 'Medical Practitioner' in the Yellow Pages telephone directory, or can be found at [Yellow Pages online](#).

For life-threatening emergencies go directly to the nearest hospital with an Accident and Emergency facility. If you need an ambulance call 000 immediately. For less urgent emergencies visit a GP or a medical centre.

[Medicare Australia](#), the Australian public health service provides an [information kit online](#) with healthcare information for people who have recently arrived in Australia or who intend to move to or visit Australia.

The Australian Government has Reciprocal Health Care Agreements (RHCAs) with several countries. If you come from Finland, Italy, Malta, Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, the UK and the Republic of Ireland, you can have access to free or low-cost doctors and hospital treatment in public hospitals while you are in Australia. If your country of origin has an RHCA and you need medical treatment you should enrol at a [Medicare office](#).

When you become a permanent resident of Australia you have access to full Medicare benefits. For information on enrolling with Medicare visit the [Medicare Australia travellers section](#) of its website.

You have to pay the full amount for prescription medicines in Australia. You may be able to claim some of the cost of medicine against private insurance. You may also find some drugs are not permitted in Australia so if you rely on prescription drugs check with the manufacturer whether the drugs are available in Australia.

### Health insurance

Business people visiting Australia from countries without a RHCA need to buy travel insurance or will need to buy private health insurance in Australia. Check that insurance covers all hospital, ambulance and doctors' fees.

An overview of the private health insurance market, with lists of insurance companies and explanations of types of cover is at the [Private Health Insurance Administration Council](#) website.