

Changing health Your health services options



A Victorian
Government
initiative



How we live today is changing, in so many ways.

Fortunately, so is our health system. It's changing to give us all, young or old, more options. More options in the care we receive, whether from our doctor, in hospital, at the local community health centre or even at home.

New day hospitals and new day procedure techniques are good examples of the changing approach to health in Victoria. There are now more options for an ageing population, and more options for the treatment of chronic conditions like diabetes, heart disease and mental illness.

At the same time, medical technologies and treatments have also changed. They've become much more advanced, recovery times are faster and outcomes are better. These changes have also created new possibilities within the health system.

The world is changing, and so is our health system.

Changing health for a changing world

Like many Victorians you may not be sure where you should go to get the best treatment. You're probably aware of various parts of the health system, particularly those you may have come into contact with. This brochure will give you an overview, and guide you through all the options that are now available. It will help you identify the service you need, when you need it.



An effective health system keeps people healthy, as well as treating them when they're sick

Your health is your most precious possession. It's worth finding out as much as possible about ways to stay healthy, and the best way to recover if you get sick. The more you know about your options, the more likely you are to stay healthy.

The GP

GPs are a vital part of the system. They have always been an essential part of the health community, and they continue to provide care close to home. They can do much more than simply monitor your health. They can also refer you to specialist services and advise you about the many options that are now available to you in our health system.

One of the best things you can do to stay healthy is to form a relationship with a GP or a practice close to where you live. Your GP can monitor your health, and advise you on the best course of action when specialist medical advice or procedures are needed.



NURSE-ON-CALL

Sometimes it's hard to know what your options are, particularly when it's the middle of the night and your local GP has closed, or when you're a long way from medical treatment. Should you go to an emergency department, or call an ambulance? Now every Victorian has a NURSE-ON-CALL: immediate, expert health advice from a registered nurse, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. And it is an option more and more Victorians are embracing; in its first year more than 380,000 Victorians contacted NURSE-ON-CALL.

The nurses won't provide a full diagnosis of your symptoms, but using the most up-to-date health information available they'll suggest ways you can care for yourself, advise you to contact a GP, or if your condition seems very serious they'll transfer the call to 000. They will also give advice about health services in your area or the numbers of phone help lines. All information is confidential.

Call 1300 60 60 24 from anywhere in Victoria for the cost of a local call (though calls from mobile phones may be charged at a higher rate). Services are available for callers who are not confident with English, as well as those who are hearing or speech impaired. Of course, if you think your situation is an emergency, you should always call 000 or go straight to an emergency department.



Community health services

There are more community health centres than ever before, and they're keeping Victorians healthy, in all sorts of ways.

Different communities have different health issues, and community health centres address them effectively. There are 100 community health services in Victoria, operating from about 400 sites, providing help for those who need it most.

Community health centres play a key role in maintaining the health of all Victorians, particularly those with the poorest health and greatest economic and social needs, or who may have trouble accessing appropriate health care. Community health services are particularly important for people with disabilities, refugees and people seeking asylum, Indigenous Australians, the homeless and those at risk of homelessness, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and, in some areas, people living in rural communities.

Community health services work with local GPs and other health professionals, and are part of the statewide, integrated health system. They promote good health and help prevent illness, or the deterioration of existing conditions. They help people take control of their health in ways that are positive and empowering.

The services they provide vary according to local needs and can include:

- allied health (physiotherapy, podiatry, dietetics, speech therapy, occupational therapy)
- community nursing
- counselling
- health promotion
- general practice
- dental
- community care
- social support and coordination of volunteers
- drug and alcohol treatment
- mental health
- youth services
- disability services
- rehabilitation services

To make contact with the community health service nearest you just call 1300 650 172 or visit www.humanservicesdirectory.vic.gov.au



Day hospitals

As medical technology improves, procedures that once involved surgery and a stay in hospital afterwards to recover can now be done in a day. These procedures are now safer, faster and less disruptive.

And, best of all, they don't need to be performed in a hospital. At least not in a regular hospital.

Day hospitals are new facilities that provide a range of treatments requiring specialist medical care, but not an overnight stay in hospital. They're different from the day procedure centres found in the private sector. They're available to public patients, and they make it much easier to access outpatient services when larger city hospitals are difficult to get to. Services include urgent care clinics, minor medical and surgical procedures, community rehabilitation, pathology, diagnostic services and specialist outpatient clinics. They offer the convenience of a medical procedure without a lengthy stay in hospital, and help patients with chronic diseases who, in the past, have required frequent hospitalisation.

The Cranbourne Integrated Care Centre and Broadmeadows Health Service are already well established, and now there are two new day hospitals at Melton and Craigieburn, as well as one under construction at Lilydale and another in the planning stage at Sunbury. This will complete the ring of day hospitals around Melbourne's growth areas and rural fringe.

Melton Health

195-209 Barries Road, Melton West, 3337
Ph (03) 9747 7600

Craigieburn Health Service

350 Craigieburn Road West, Craigieburn 3064
Ph (03) 8338 3000

Broadmeadows Health Service

35 Johnstone Street, Broadmeadows, 3074
Ph (03) 8345 5000

Cranbourne Integrated Care Centre

140-154 Sladen Street, Cranbourne, 3977
Ph (03) 5990 6789



The emergency department

Emergency departments of our hospitals are among the best in the world. They're always there when you require emergency care.

Depending on your condition, there may be other options. If you're not sure whether to go to emergency or to wait, you can always talk to NURSE-ON-CALL.



Hospital in the Home

These days you can be a hospital patient without having to be in hospital. You'll be more comfortable, and probably recover faster.

As its name suggests Hospital in the Home is hospital care in your own home. You're still a hospital patient under the care of the hospital. But you'll get well in the reassuring, peaceful, familiar surroundings of your own home, with someone from the hospital visiting regularly to monitor your progress.

Hospital in the Home has been around for some years now, but it's not widely known. Yet it's a suitable alternative for many hospital patients. Of course where more complex health issues are involved it may not be appropriate. When it is, the results are impressive. Many patients, particularly children, prefer being treated at home. Familiar surroundings are not just more pleasant, but can actually help you get better. Studies have shown that recovery times are often faster for patients who are treated at home.

Hospital in the Home is voluntary. Patients and their carers must agree to have care provided this way. There's no additional cost, and it's available to public patients from 45 participating public hospitals across the state.

Hospital in the Home is helping the system and patients recover back to their everyday lives sooner.

**It's worth taking a healthy interest in
the health options available to you**

**For more information visit
www.health.vic.gov.au/changinghealth**

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publication in an accessible format
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Authorised by the Victorian Government,
50 Lonsdale St, Melbourne
Printed on sustainable paper by Big Print,
50 Lonsdale St, Melbourne
(0510607) July 2007