

Enrolment information guide for patients

Why should I enrol?

If you enrol with a General Practice your care will be subsidised by the Government.

General Practices can only enrol you if you are eligible for publicly funded health services.¹

When you enrol you may be asked to show proof which could include a passport or birth certificate; please do not be offended when asked. You will also be asked to complete and sign an enrolment form.

Being an enrolled patient has the following benefits:

- Better access to healthcare with a team that knows you and your needs and care
- Cheaper visits with general or nurse practitioners (may be free for under 14s)
- Cheaper prescription fees (free for under 14s)
- More support with health conditions, including long-term conditions, such as diabetes and high blood pressure
- Access to screening programmes you may be entitled to – such as bowel cancer screening and more – and healthy lifestyle advice, including support to help you quit smoking
- Ongoing vaccination programmes

Enrolment lasts indefinitely, but if you do not visit your GP for three years, you may be removed from the register. You can always re-enrol.

Other circumstances where you may be asked to sign an enrolment form:

Enrolling children (under 16 years)

Parents can enrol and sign for children under 16 years of age, but children 16 years or over must sign their own form.

Enrolling someone else (other than children)

In some circumstances, you may sign for another person if they are unable to consent on their own behalf. This is referred to as 'Signed by Authority'.

Casual patient

If you are enrolled in another practice and just visiting this practice, or you do not meet the enrolment criteria, you can register as a casual patient and complete and sign the 'Casual Patient Details' form. You will be charged the casual rate (higher fee) for your consultation.

Casual patients will not have the benefits of enrolled patients for ongoing support, cheaper fees, recalls and reminders for screening programmes they are eligible for.

Frequently asked questions

What happens if I go to another general practice?

You can go to another general practice or change to a new general practice at any time. If you are enrolled in a general practice and visit another practice as a casual patient, you will pay a higher fee for that visit. So, if you have more than one general practice you should consider enrolling with the practice you visit most often.

¹ Refer to the Ministry of Health website on enrolment for the eligibility criteria:

<https://www.tewhatauora.govt.nz/corporate-information/our-health-system/eligibility-for-publicly-funded-health-services>

What happens if I am enrolled in a general practice but don't see them very often?

If you have not received services from your general practice in a three-year period, it is likely that the practice will contact you and ask if you wish to remain with the practice. If you are not able to be contacted or do not respond, your name will be taken off the Practice and PHO Enrolment Registers. You can re-enrol with the same general practice or another general practice and affiliated PHO at any time.

What if I am not able to afford visits to my general practice?

Eligible patients can ask for a Community Services Card (CSC) or High Use Health Card (HUHC) to help lower the cost of medical appointments. These cards give discounts on different healthcare services, such as lower fees for doctor visits, prescription medications, after-hours appointments, and more.

What is a PHO?

Most general practices are now part of a Primary Health Organisation (PHO). Health New Zealand/Te Whatu Ora contracts with PHOs to provide primary care services in a certain geographical area.

Will I be contacted for surveys?

To improve healthcare services, you may be invited to take part in a national patient experience **survey**. This is anonymous. You can ignore the invitation or choose not to participate and inform the practice team.

Privacy and your health information

Your personal and health information is subject to the Privacy Act 2020 and the Health Information Privacy Code 2020, so the privacy of your information is protected.

The health information that is collected in your medical records is shared with others involved in your healthcare and with other health agencies. This is described fully in the 'Use and Confidentiality of your Health Information' below which you will be shown at the time of enrolling with the practice.

If you do not want your health information shared, you can opt-off sharing, however this may affect the quality of care you receive. There are a few options

- You can remain as an enrolled patient and opt-off sharing health data with the PHO outside of the practice, however as health is funded by the government, there will be limited identifiable data sharing for accountability purposes with the PHO and Ministry of Health.
- If you are a casual patient, then any health data shared for accountability purposes with the PHO and Ministry of Health will be non-identifiable.
- Casual patients can also opt-off any data sharing at all, and this is noted by ticking the opt-off box on the Casual Patient Details' Form.

What about Shared Health Records?

Your GP may participate in Your Health Summary, which allows after-hours clinics or hospitals to see a limited summary of your medical history in an emergency. You can opt-out by informing your GP.