



# Health in Geneva

Have you just arrived in Geneva and are a beneficiary of the Hospice général? Do you have questions about health and access to care?

This document provides you with answers to the following questions.

- 1. Asylum care network
- 2. How does the asylum care network work?
- 3. What to do in case of an emergency?
- 4. What to do if your child is unwell?
- 5. How to get medications prescribed by your doctor?
- 6. How to access dental care?
- 7. How to get a pair of glasses?
- 8. What are the medical expenses you have to pay?
- 9. What happens in the event of an accident?





## 1. Asylum care network

Health insurance is mandatory in Switzerland. You are insured with a health insurance scheme through Swiss Risk & Care SA.

When you arrived, your social worker provided you with a provisional health insurance certificate. You will need this to access care.

Your health treatment will take place within the framework of a care network, which means that you will be allocated a primary care doctor, either from Programme santé migrants (PSM) or from the pool of private doctors attached to the network.

The medication prescribed for you by this primary care doctor must be obtained from a pharmacy in the PharmAsile network.

The nurse meeting you on arrival will guide you and give you the name of your personal primary care doctor.

Any physical or mental health problem can be discussed in total confidence with your nurse or doctor.

## 2. How does the asylum care network work?

### **For adults:**

Adults must consult the primary care doctor assigned to them and not any other doctor. If the doctor considers it necessary, the patient will be referred to a specialist and will be given a “delegation notice”.

You should not in any circumstances consult a specialist without a delegation notice from your primary care doctor, except in the case of a gynecologist or ophthalmologist.

### **For minors:**

Minors are not required to have a primary care doctor appointed. They may consult the doctor of their choice [private pediatrician, children’s hospital or young persons’ health scheme (Programme santé jeunes)].

### **In order to access care, you must produce:**

- your residence permit [type N, F, S or B permit or delayed departure certificate (*attestation de délai de départ*) for emergency help].
- your Swiss Risk & Care SA health insurance card (or the temporary certificate provided on arrival).

If your card is lost or stolen, you should contact your social worker or your finance and administration manager.



### 3. What to do in case of an emergency?

#### If you are housed at a collective living center:

- In the case of a relative emergency (which can wait a while), you may contact a nurse from Programme santé migrants (PSM) on site or go and see your primary care doctor.
- In the case of a genuine emergency (which cannot wait), contact the on-site team immediately who will guide you and suggest the most appropriate means of transport.
- In the case of a life-threatening emergency, the on-site team will call 144 and an ambulance.

#### If you have individual housing:

- In the case of a relative emergency (which can wait a while), you should contact your primary care doctor either through *Programme santé migrants* (PSM), or at the doctor's private office or clinic.
- In the case of a genuine emergency (which cannot wait), you should go to the emergency department of the University Hospital of Geneva (HUG) using the most suitable means of transport in the circumstances: public transport or taxi (ask for a receipt for the refund).
- Only call **144** and an ambulance in the case of a life-threatening emergency.

Be careful! An ambulance must only be called when there is reason to do so and in the event of a life-threatening emergency. Any abuse of the service could mean that you are charged.

### 4. What to do if your child is unwell?

You can contact a nurse from Programme santé migrants (PSM) or the referring pediatrician. If it is an emergency, contact the on-site team who will guide you. Children will be sent to the pediatric emergency department.

The brochure "[la santé de votre enfant](#)" ([your child's health](#)) (translated into fourteen languages) provides advice and information on looking after your child. You will find this University Hospital of Geneva (HUG) brochure on the [Bonjour Genève](#) website.

#### University Hospital of Geneva (HUG) apps:

- The [Mon enfant est malade](#) (My child is unwell) app gives advice on caring for a child who is unwell or injured.
- The [Infokids](#) pediatric emergency department app helps you to decide whether your child's illness requires a consultation.



## 5. How to get medications prescribed by your doctor?

### To get your medication:

- You must have a written prescription.
- You should only go to a pharmacy on the PharmAsile list provided by your social worker. Once you have chosen a pharmacy, you should always go to the same one.
- You should produce your health insurance card (or provisional certificate) and your residence permit [type N, F, S or B permit or delayed departure certificate (*attestation de délai de départ*) for emergency help].

Be careful! You will have to pay yourself for any medication which is not prescribed by the doctor or is not considered by your doctor to be “essential for your treatment”.

## 6. How to access dental care?

In order to receive dental care, you need a dental guarantee from the Hospice général that depends upon the Hospice général’s approval. Please see your support worker at the Hospice général to get your guarantee.

## 7. How to get a pair of glasses?

In order to receive a pair of glasses, you need an optical guarantee from the Hospice général that depends upon the Hospice général’s approval. Please see your social/administration support worker to get your guarantee.

## 8. What are the expenses you have to pay?

Medical expenses are managed by the Hospice général. If you do receive a bill for medical services, do not pay it and immediately send it to your support worker.

If you miss an appointment, you will be invoiced for the sum of CHF 50.00.

Beware! If you cannot attend a medical appointment, you must give 24 hours’ notice to avoid being charged for a missed appointment.

## 9. What happens in the event of an accident?

You are insured for the costs in the event of an accident under your health insurance cover, but you will have to fill out an “accident report” to get the costs refunded by the insurance. If you are working, your employer’s accident insurance will cover the cost of any treatment.

[In all cases, it is important to fill out the accident report questionnaire for your insurance quickly.](#)